

pretty sure I not going to make it to Los Angeles, but the Immigration going to catch me--is the only way to get me the Immigration and throw me to Mexico and return to Guadalajara. To that guy I ask him to give me a ride only to the 78 Highway, and that's it--I don't ask him for the ticket, I buy the ticket. I want to take my last chance, you see. I going to take my last chance, because I say, Why I going to pay for throw me in Mexico? When the Immigration can put me there any minute it can find me.

I: So, in other words, if you could get to Los Angeles, you wanted to go there; but if you couldn't get to Los Angeles you wanted the Immigration to take you back to Mexico?

A: Yes, straight to Guadalajara. Now, when I walking right there, there is an old car, about a '36 Chevvy, a club coupe, one seat, you see, only one seat (sic), a '36, very old Chevvy, parking one side, parking in front of me, maybe about a half block away from me. And I was walking like that, and when I went close to the car, I saw the guy looking a map, a road map. Just like that, I pass by, and he told me, "Hey, bracero!" "Yeah, what you want?" "Where you going?" In Spanish. "Where you going?" "Oh, to San Marcos--why?" I going to take a bus over there to Los Angeles. "You want a ride, or you want to go walking?" "I want a ride, if you want." "Let's go." When I went to the car, when I went to his car, he start, he told me, "Where you going? What is your plans?" you know. And I tell him, "Ah, you see, I was working here, and now I think so I got a little bit money to return to Mexico." And he told me, "Well, I go to San Marcos." And before we get to the depot, the bus depot, in San Marcos, he told me, "You know, I'm a bracero too. And now I going to Mexico. I come from Corcoran right now. I come from Corcoran, I picking cotton over there in Corcoran. Is finish the cotton already--the first picking is finish over there in Corcoran, and I go to Mexico. But I'm looking for someone, they owe me two hundred dollars."

I: Was he a bracero or an alambre?

A: Alambre, yeah. And he told me the way he stay: "You see, you got a car and you be alone most of the time, the Immigration don't bother you. Just be alone, don't try to --don't hang out in the cantinas." He told me it is his third year he is there, and "I come here, and work the whole year, and move to Tijuana, and leave the car in Tijuana. I leave the car in Tijuana--I am going to Mexico"--he was from Chapala--Juan Perez from Chapala, from Ajijic--no, not exactly Chapala, from Ajijic, close to Chapala.

I: How old a guy was he?

A: About 27.

I: Well if he was an alambre, how ~~he~~ could he cross the border with his car?

A: No, that's what I say--he got somebody to cross his car and leave the car on the main street in Tijuana San Ysidro, and he jump the line, and get the car and start driving inside. Well, he explain that way, and told me he looking for someone who owe him two hundred dollars. And we were looking around San Marcos, and around Escondido, and in the places those persons ~~think~~ tell him maybe living around there. In a camp with a lot of lemon-pickers, right there, they told him, "Those persons, they move to Bakersfield, because of the cotton places," and they give him the address of the camp and everything in Bakersfield, you see. And that night--we stay that night with those guys, because those guys are a friend of him, you see. And after go to bed, he told me, "Let's go eat to Escondido." We return to Escondido, you see. And when we were in Escondido we went to a Mexican restaurant, and the lady start telling us right away, they notice we are alambres, and start telling, "You know, the Immigration right now start sending all the alambres real far away to Yucatan, and they give you a real

awful crewcut in the haircut," and things like that. And she tell us, "What you going to eat?" "Oh, I don't know." "Just order whatever you want to eat." And he order menudo, you see. And that's what happen. When I get the first sopa of menudo, is burn up my mouth, because I don't figure it out was too hot because the other guy eat it real easy, but because I have about 30 days I don't eat anything hot, just only cold--I no eat nothing hot, you see--and I can't eat real good because my mouth was burn up. Anyway, next morning he told me, "What you going to do? I going to make a trip to Bakersfield again. You want to go with me, or you want to be in San Marcos?" I tell him, "You know, I don't got nothing to lose. You got a car, and you going to lose more than myself if the Immigration is got ourselves--it's up to you. If you want to give me a ride to Bakersfield, is all right for me." "Okay, let's go." Then he say, "Okay, here is the map"--he mean his map, and I have my own map, too; and he told me, "We going to do this way--right now--we are in Escondido--we are going to head like going to Ramona." But before we went to Ramona, we--. We got the 78, like we trying to go to--. "If the Immigration stop us right here, we going to Mexicali, we going out to Mexicali," he said, you see. And we going to the 78 because going into the mountains or something like that to the east. And, but in the middle of the mountains we start making the turn--we make turn to north and start climb up to the north. And we looking for the roads of the less--small roads, you see. Just any small road mark on the map, that's what we follow, you see. We head right up to Santa Fe, and at Santa Fe we make a short-cut to Mesa Grande, a real small town. And even the road was a dirt road, and all the time we looking for this kind of road, because the Immigration--don't get close to the 345 because is real hot, or the 101, or the 99--is real hot right there. Now, we going to be far away from this town. Now we headed to the Mesa Grande, and from Mesa Grande to Hemet--the town is named Hemet--and from Hemet we make a short-cut and right there, I think so, we went along the 345 for a few miles, and cross by a big lake, a lake to the east, to the west, and that road take you straight to Corona. After we are in Corona, we pass Chino; after we are in Chino, we went to the 99 already for Pomona. We went to the Puente, you see. After we are in Puente, that guy say, "I know somebody here. Let's go eat right here in La Puente." And I remember this guy, because anytime when I say "eat," we are lost already. And I tell him all the time what is the road--"This road take us to this place"--and always I keep the eyes on the map. We pass by Monte Palomar, or the road to go to Monte Palomar. And about that time I got the map open, in front of my face, like reading, and he told me, "Don't move! Don't move!" "Why?" "Just don't move!" And after a few minutes, "Why you don't want me to move?" "The Immigration was--right now they cross us." And when he say "Don't move!" the Immigration trying to look in our ear, like to see if somebody in the middle, you see. But maybe because it is an old car or something, they don't pay attention to us. And later on, about two times we cross by the Immigration, right there in those roads--but just cross by, you see. And after, when we eating in La Puente, we start eating in La Puente, and he give me coffee, we order coffee and comida corrida, beans and everything. And I start smoking a cigarette with my coffee, and he told me, --I think so I tell him already I was in the Army--and when he saw me drinking coffee, he told me, "Hey, you like the marihuana?" "Why, you got something?" "No, but I know you like it, eh?" "No, I don't like it too much, but I know what is marihuana." And after we finish, he say, "You want some birria?" And down in Mexico birria is goat meat, you see, but I finally figure it out he mean "beer." And I finish already, eat up my beans and everything, and he offer me birria, and I figure it out, this guy is crazy--I not so hungry like that. I tell him, "No, I don't want no birria, I'm full already." "Oh yeah." And he order two Luckies. And when I saw the bottles of Lucky beers, and I read the word "beer," that's when I figure it out--aw, those guys! So that is what mean "birria":

I: Well, what about the marihuana?

A: No, he just tell me that my face and my eyes, and you see, and the way I drink coffee, because I drink coffee and give a puff of the cigarette, and he say this is the way the marihuanos drink coffee or something.

I: But he didn't have any marihuana?

A: No, he didn't have any. Well, and that day we keep moving, keep moving to Los Angeles, real easy, and by that night we are right there by the 99. And the 99--they have a red light over there on the 99--because we lost about 3 or 4 times in Los Angeles, you see, we are driving in Los Angeles ~~and we lost the whole afternoon~~, and we lost the whole afternoon in Los Angeles, because sometimes he don't ~~make~~ make the turns in time, and we trying to find the road, and we take the whole afternoon to cross Los Angeles. When we are in San Fernando maybe is about 5 o'clock, or 4:30 or 6:30. Well, after we are in San Fernando we start driving in the old car, you know, and we made it to the mountains. And when I see a red light from the officer, sometimes he notice I was as scared of the red light or something, and say, "Oh, don't worry, we don't have any more chance of the Immigration stop us--they don't have any more Immigration around here," you see. Anyway, we sleep--we come to Bakersfield. Maybe we are in Bakersfield about 11 or 11:30 or 12 in the night. We stay in Bakersfield close to the light--one light is turning around right there--everytime I cross by to Bakersfield I saw that light and I remember I sleep right there.

I: Near the airport, you mean--the light at the airport?

A: Yes.

I: And you slept in the car there, huh?

A: Yes, we slept in the car. And we start talking about it, and he told me about the algodon--maybe we can pick the second crop in the Algodon right there in Coacorona. And, but that night we don't have ~~any~~ enough covers. And I thinking, algodon? And over there in Mexico the only algodon I know is--if I can remember--is when I was very small, you see--a big tree from algodon grow over there in Eztlan or in San Pedro. I don't know where I saw that tree. But you see, big, big tree like any other tree, and the algodon hanging up on the tree. And he told me he picking the cotton--

I: On a tree? Un arbol?

A: A tree, yes. Over there in Mexico I think somebody told me if you leave the plant, is grow up like ~~not~~ a tree. Over there in Mexico grow like a tree, you see, and I see the algodon hanging, you see, the cotton hanging. And I was the whole night thinking about what is the way to picking the cotton around here, because I saw the sack 10 feet long or 12 feet long, and what is the way the cotton is hanging right out on the tree, what for we going to need the sack, you see? And I figure it out, maybe from a step-ladder, to go on top of it and drop the cotton in the sack, you see. Anyway, that night I don't saw any cotton fields or nothing, and I was thinking what is the way I going to pick cotton. For the 1st time in my life I going to see a lot of cottons to pick and use that big sack. Next day I saw the cotton fields, and ~~know~~ it was strange for me, and I tell him, you see. You see, I expect to see a cotton tree, like I remember, like I find out over there in my land. But now I know what I going to do, what is the way I going to use the sack. Well, next day he find out the person that owe him the money.

I: He got his money, huh?

A: No, he got a promise, just only a promise. And he tell me, "Well, what we going to do? Right here is not many cotton around. If I leave you here--they almost finish the 2nd picking--I think so I going to give you a ride to

Corcoran, and leave you over there, because over there is going to start the second picking, and I think so you can do a little bit more better over there than over here. And I going to recommend you in the place where I was before, where I was myself, and you stay there for the winter." Well, he give me a ride from Bakersfield to Corcoran, and I try to pay his gas, or pay some kind of food, and always he told me, "Oh, forget it; anyway I going out, you coming in." And he took me to the ranch. And in those days was the name of Roberto Bravo, and the ranch Peterson Camp, right there in Corcoran.

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I: Oh, was Roberto Bravo the name of a labor contractor?

A: Yes, he was a labor contractor. And Peterson Camp. And he introduce me with the guys, and he leave me with him, you see, in a small cabin, right there in Corcoran. And leave me like that, "Okay, you are here now." Even he leave his own sack for me. "Okay, with this you going to pick tomorrow cotton." And he went back to Mexico, you see. Well, I was surprised to be in Corcoran so fast, just like that, you see. And when I open my map. And that night I cannot sleep, thinking about already in Corcoran, and the place ~~saw~~ many times I thinking about when I study the map every day back there in Escondido. And just like that I am there.

I: And you say the mayordomo was named Roberto Bravo? Was he a Mexican-American?

A: Contratista Roberto Bravo--is a real famous contratista. In 1952--Roberto Bravo, right there in Corcoran. His father was a--lend his license, you see, because his father start with a contractor's license, and I think his boy was pretty smart--. And anyway, right there, in 1950--his name is anyplace around Corcoran a real famous name.

I: And did Peterson own the ranch?

A: Peterson is the name of the camp, the labor camp. And Peterson is the name of the companies, or something.

I: Well did Peterson own the ranch?

A: Yes, the land. And the camp is named Peterson. And the other camp, I think so, we call it the Campo Blanco. And the other, the Peterson Camp.

I: But you worked for the labor contractor?

A: Yes. We picking cotton for the labor contractor.

I: What did they have, a barracks there, or--?

A: Small cabins for the persons, they picking year after year. And tents for the person that stay only one or two months.

I: Then you lived in a tent, huh?

A: No, I live in a--. Because that other guy stay about 3 or 2 years before over there, they give me chance for a cabin.

I: Did you live by yourself in the cabin?

A: No, we were about 4 guys in that cabin, you see--one bed in each corner of the room. And the kitchen we have in the middle of the room. Our beds was only--these beds--canvas beds, with a lot of cotton, mattresses of cotton, you see; you got cotton on the bottom for a mattress. And this is the way I stayed until the finish of the picking, to the cotton season.

I: How long were you there?

A: I stay to--I think we are already in December--maybe I stay till the Christams time. And after the Christmastime, maybe in January, those guys say, "We move to Santa Barbara to try to pick some lemons, to the lemons."

I: How much did they pay you there?

A: I pick up, I start--the same price to everybody, the tiny people around there-- in those days is three-fifty the hundred pounds.

I: How much could you make a day?

A: The 1st day I make 60 pounds. And later I make only around 200, or 250--about 6 or 7 dollars a day.

I: And did you have to pay for your food there?

A: Yes, supposed to pay. If you want to they give you the--the mother of the contractor, of Roberto Bravo--they have a, they call it abordados. See, if you eat over there in the house they call it abordados, you see. They give you the food for 2 dollars a day.

I: Did you eat there?

A: No. I don't like the kind of food, because they put too much chile in everything, you see. They put too much chile, and--see, the mantequilla, the Mexican butter, is the chile. And I start fighting with them, because I tell them, the butter, the Mexican butter is the chile, because they don't give you something else. "Put ~~good~~ butter right here on your table." I eat only about 3 or 4 days, and I tell them, "That food don't cost you two dollars--is lousy." "Oh, ho--you know nothing about ~~the~~ the food--all the Mexicans they want chile--that's what they want."

I: What was the food, though, besides chile?

A: A pot of chile and beans. And a little sopa, like--different sopa, like macaroni, spaghetti, something like that. And maybe meat once or two times a week. And in the morning, every day every day/two eggs for each guy, and a egg or that's all his breakfast. And I tell them, "I don't like that kind of--no milk, no nothing; just only black coffee." And for lunch they give you just 3 sandwiches with some baloney, and that's it--and 2 or 3 chilás. And I start buying my own food.

I: Oh, wasn't it dangerous to go to a grocery store?

A: No, in Corcoran you can walking up and down like any other person. And somebody start telling me--. I start buying Levys, work Levys and jacket--Levy jacket and big hat like a cowboy, you see. And I don't talk to nobody.

I: How far from town was the camp?

A: Oh, about five miles.

I: How did you get to town to buy your food?

A: Somebody they give me a ride--or later on I start making friends with somebody, they give me a ride to town.

I: How big a camp was it--how many men were there?

A: Oh--you see, this is--maybe that's why the Immigration don't bother too many that camp, because it is a familiar camp, you see. Once in a while you see maybe ~~2xxxx~~ about 2 or 3 cabins, is a family in one or 2, you see. And I start make friends with one family from Imperial Valley. They come to pick right there, you see. And they use about 3 or 4 cabins, you see. And we are in the middle of them.

I: There were just 3 or 4 cabins there?

A: No, there's 45 cabins. And about 20 tents around--you see, a lot of persons around--maybe 100 or 200 persons.

I: Were there any Anglos there?

A: Sure. Okies, and colored people, and everybody is around, you see. And I make

the real good friendship with that family--the family, the last name was Calderon, those families, you know. And the friend, he named Frank Calderon, he give me a ride to towns, and I buy my food and everything. And later on I buy my work clothes, like a cowboy or Texas, you see. And somebody say--once in a while when they saw me in the field, somebody, just like that, told me, "Hey, you from Texas, no?" "Yeah, I am from Texas," I said--and because a lot of Texans don't talk English, or something, and maybe--. I am all the time just like a Texan, a cowboy, you see. And I think so I start telling I am from Texas--not anymore mojado. And later on, I told my friend, Calderon, I want to learn to drive a car, if he give me a chance to learn in his car--because I have a little knowledge when I was in Mexico, about mechanic and this and that, you see. And he lend me his car, and even though some other friend of mine--. By example, in that year, in January, we move to Santa Barbara, to some other camp, labor camp, in Santa Barbara--trying to be in the lemon-picking, you see. But we can't go in there--just stay in the camp, and the camp even--just eat and--and pay with my few savings I have, (see, paying for my food. But I stay maybe for 20 or 40 days, until Juan Perez (you return from Mexico, you see. He return from Mexico at that camp. Well, I was so happy because he returned, and told me, "What happened? What you doing?" "Nothing. I have already about a month here, and I don't do anything ~~now~~." "Well, let's go, if nothing to do around here." "No, nothing to do." But in that time it was already March, you see--March or April.

I: March? Oh--you're talking about over there at Santa Barbara.

A: Yes. Because I return to // I told you, when he leave me right there in Corcoran, that was 1950, Christmas of 1950. And March, 1951--I move to Santa Barbara in January or February and stay a whole month and don't do anything in Santa Barbara--just live in the camp, you see.

I: Oh you had to spend your own money then?

A: Yes, I spend all my savings.

I: Well, could you tell me a little bit more about the camp in Corcoran, and what it was like--?

A: I going to return--for 2 or 3 years I return to that camp, you see. After I stay in the camp, they don't do any more job, they don't have anything else, you see. I move to Santa Barbara, and stay in that camp. And that camp was--it was a big barraca or bunk--.

I: In Santa Barbara.

A: In Santa Barbara.

I: Oh, was that camp in Santa Barbara owned by a labor contractor or a farmer?

A: I think so a labor contractor, because I pay my money, just--

I: A Mexican-American labor contractor?

A: A Mexican-American contractor, yes. And I stay for 15 days, and they don't give me any job, and--

I: Did you go there by yourself, or--?

A: No, I went with another 3 guys.

I: With Calderon?

A: No, Calderon they return in the winter, they return to the Imperial Valley. And those guys--one of those guys was from Chapala too--those two brothers, you see. One was called Chato, a real skinny guy--and the other his name is Johnny.

I: And did they have a car?

A: They had a car. And Johnyy was married with a--we call 'em--American woman, but she was an Okie, we call 'em Okie.

I: And did she live there in the camp with him?

A: She live right there in Coocoran.

I: And they were alambres, huh?

A: Yes. But he was married with that lady, and she got two sons from some American person, you see. And about 7 from his wife. And the welfare--he receive a check for those two kids, and for the rest of the kids, because he don't make enough money or something. But he--.

I: How could he get a welfare check if he was a wetback?

A: Well, they pay not to you, just for the--this is aid to the needy children. Just the wife get the check.

I: And did she work in the fields too?

A: No. Just stay in the home, and--. That guy is--that person give me a ride to Santa Barbera.

I: In other words, you went in the car with him, his wife, and seven--

A: No, he alone. He return--he turn back to Coocoran. Because they stay the year around right there in Coocoran. Because if you stay the year around right there, you don't pay gas, you don't pay light, you don't pay anything, just don't pay any rent. But you stay there. Well, they leave us over there, me and his brother, but we don't working, and that day return Juan--after a month, you see--return Juan Perez. And he told me, "Okay, let's go--I don't think so, nothing do around here, let's go moving to Sacramento. Or Santa Maria. To Santa Maria." Well, I put my things in his car, and the same old car--

I: Just the two of you, huh?

A: No, he have another--. Just me, and--the guy I make a trip with to Santa Barbara, he don't want to go--he want to stay there in Santa Barbara.

Because, something--job come up or something. But he got a new friend, he pick up a new friend someplace, in Los Angeles or someplace. A real small kid, about 16 or 15 years old kid. Well, we put our things in the car, we start driving to Santa Maria. But the car--it was March already, you see, is the month of March--and he got his license plate for 1950. And he don't have any driver's license, and the car don't have any good brakes, and he don't have any klaxon, to--horn, you see. Well, we keep moving from the 101, you see, with our road map, getting to Santa Maria--but just real easy. We find out in Santa Maria there is nothing much to do, only the thinning beets, you see. We try a few days, and we buy some, a little food, we keep moving to--. Or, no. In that time I think--. Yeah, we trying to stay right there in Santa Maria, when one of his friends--because he got a lot of friends around places--in Santa Maria we went to one camp, this was before the air base camp, you see, and a lot of bunks, but is a familiar camp too. Is a familiar camp, and we stay there in between the, with the married mans or something like that. Because we tell the man, later on we going to take our wives to live there, but meanwhile we looking for a job, for a house, and later on we going to take our wife in there, you see. And we stayed there, and the ladies looking us, to the 3 guys alone all the time, and they expect to see the lady or something. But we want to live right there, because we have more chance the Immigration don't bother us, you see. And we went to the fields, thinning beets, and in the afternoon return. But we don't make enough--they pay por destajo, by piece-work, you see.

I: About how much did you earn?

A: About 12 dollars an acre--thinning beets. But the three together, sometimes we can make just one acre, you see. Because is a lot of weeds, and is real short the azedon, the hoe is real small, and is real hard thinning beets, you see. So we made about 4 dollars or 5 dollars, and we don't work all the time, you see, because sometime was too wet or something.

I: And this was a labor camp too?

A: Yes, but we don't have any--. That labor camp is only a labor camp, and nobody--not any contractor right there, you see. We went and looking for our own job around Santa Maria.

I: Well, who ran the camp?

A: This is a--. I don't remember--we don't pay rent either in that camp. That is a labor camp--I think maybe in that day the contractor, the owner of the camp, maybe they don't have nothing, or the city loan the camp, or something. Because we don't pay rent, you see. Because the big bunks are, bunks was divided, maybe for 3 families to live in one barrack, you see.

I: How did you get your food?

A: Just went, went to town.

I: Was there a stove there?

A: Yes, we have a petroleo stove, an oven, you see. And for boiling our beans was a can, a 3 pounds can--that's coffee--3 pounds can or something --and with that kind of can we boiling our beans, you see. And for plates--because we don't have any money, just was real short of money--we use a kind of deal, small cans, small cans like that for a glass, or things like that. And that was our plates, you see. And for bed, we got only cardboards and paper--we pick it up around the store. And that thing was in January, February, March--or maybe in February--but we don't have money to buy the new plates for '51 for the car, you see. And this is the way we stay like that for a while.

I: You didn't have blankets?

A: We don't have any blankets. In the night, stay the 3 of us together, and put on the stove, and the oven and everything, burning all night, and this is the way we keep a little bit warm in the home, you see. And later on--one day--we stayed right there for a while, you know--we figure out we stay, maybe later on we can get money to buy plates and buy things like that. But one time, we forgot to take away the pot, the bean pot from the stove, and leave the stove on, you see. And about maybe an hour we leave the camp, you see, and the house start smoking--all the ladies around was scared because--especially the lady live close to us because if burn right there the house is going to burn the rest of the house, no?--in that special place. And they break the lock, and went and see what we got, you see--our bed, our plates, our--. And well, we are so ashamed, in the afternoon just we waiting to make dark, and we put our things in the car and we leave the camp--because we are ashamed.

I: How long were you there?

A: Maybe about 15 days or something. And we start moving to--north. And by that time is already--like I say is already pass February--maybe it was in March already. And after we leave Santa Maria, and we keep climbing here into Sacramento. We try to be in Stockton, to be in Stockton, you see. But we went by the 101, and later on we leave the 101 for the Rio Vista, close to Rio Vista, Walnut Grove. Right there as soon as we cross Walnut Grove, the Highway Patrol stop us. And say, "What happen the stop light, you don't have any stop light." "Oh, I'm sorry, officer."

I: Oh, it was night time, huh?

A: No, in the day--. Or I think he check, he ask us right away for the license. "What happen with your new plates?" "Well, I don't have my ne--I going to go to work and buy the plates." "Oh, yeah? Let me see your driver's license." "No, I don't have any driver's license." "Let me check the brakes on your car." And, "You don't have any brakes. Let me see your klaxon. You don't have any klaxon. You guys--!" And after, he told us, "You are wetbacks?" I don't understand the officer, what he say.

I: Did he speak Spanish?

A: No, in English. But later on he told me, you see, Juan Perez tell me what the officer ~~is~~ tell him, you see. "You are wetbacks?" And he say, "No." "What do you mean you're not? Even your pants is not dried up--" He looked at our goddamned pants--"You are wetbacks because the pants is still wet yet." And he look at the pants. And he say, "Well, you know something? I going to take your friend to jail, because he don't got driver's license, nothing like that. But you and your friend--me and the other guy--"you go straight ahead, right there is a labor camp; maybe they give you some job in some place," you see. "That means I can't do nothing for your friend, because I going to take him to the jail. That car--you later on come looking for your things in the car"--trying to make me understand, you see--"the car is going to be in this garage." He point the name of the truck, you see--the truck is going to pull up the car to the garage to a storage place, you see. Well, me and the other guy start walking to the place--about two miles or three miles away--somebody pick us and give us a ride to the camp, you see. When I went to the camp, the man say, "That camp is going to be closed, because I don't have nothing to do anymore, and I'm pretty sure I going to close the camp, because I don't have any job at all. The only person that got a little bit job is Blas Perez. He is about two miles south from Walnut Grove, or five miles from Walnut Grove. And near there is Blas Perez, a Mexican contractor, he have a camp. And that camp"--he told me--"that camp is open the whole winter. But I going to close my camp because I don't have nothing to do." Well, I tell him, "You can't give us a ride over there?" "No, I'm sorry, I can't give you any ride." Well, we stay in the road asking for rides, you know, and somebody give us a ride to that place. And I start thinking about the name Blas Perez, you see. And the name of my companion they take to jail is Juan Perez. And I make a story in my mind, you see--when I was in front of the contractor I tell him, "You see, we come to your place, but first we going to check from some friend in Stockton, and later on we going to return right here, because Juan Perez told me he working before with you--you are Blas Perez?" "Yeah, I am." "Well, that's why--" "And who is Juan Perez?" "I don't know--maybe he told me he know you very well, and he talk to me about you, you are a nice person"--this and that--"now I like to know if you can do something for him before the Immigration got him over there in Sacramento, because we don't have license plates and this and that on the car."

I: And they took him to Sacramento, huh?

A: Yes. And he went and saw the car, you see. "Oh yeah, this is small nice car. And I think so I going to send Clemente"--Clemente, one of his--a nephew from him or something, a young boy, not too young, about 25 or 28--"and tell him go up to Sacramento before turn in to the Immigration and try to get this Juan Perez--since he say he know me or something. And you are three of you--you going to work for me and pay the fine, ah?" "Yes, is all right--we working for you and pay the fine for that guy." And that camp is only old mans, very old mans, winos--we call them winos, no--like Gusymas.

I: Russians Anglos?

A: Yes, and Mexicans, and about two or three coloreds.

I: And they're all winos, huh?

A: Yes, winitos--son winitos, you see. Because, I think so he give you the--the thing he is doing is give you food for all winter, you see--and wine. Keep in wine and everything. And some of those guys stay year after year and never pay the amount of food they owe, you see. With \$100 or \$70 in the hole.

I: How many guys were in this camp?

A: About 10 old mans. About 10 or 15.

I: How old was Blas Perez?

A: He is about 55.

I: In other words he sold wine and food to those guys, huh?

A: Yes--to keep them there--this is the way they live.

I: Did he charge them more than the stores?

A: I think so--I don't know exactly--but he charge for a big drink like that--I don't know exactly how much it cost--but they give a drink there every morning to the guys, before dinner, and after dinner, and this and that.

I: Oh he fed them himself, huh--he had a kitchen there?

A: Yeah, he got kitchen, and charge two dollars a day for the food. Plus the wine or something. Anyway, he send Clemente for to pick up Juan Perez before the Immigration got him. And he got him before the Immigration, you see, and pay the fine, \$70, and bring back to the place, you see.

I: Didn't he have to get a license?

A: No, the car was in storage already.

I: Oh, they took the car.

A: No, he brought back the guy, but--. Anyway, later on, it was a little bit raining, you see, and it was slippery. We was working outside, when it start raining a little bit, when we saw Johnny come walking from the road, you see, and slip right down close to us and sit down in the mud. And anyway, we were glad to see him again, and I start talking about, "What happened over there in Sacramento?" And what is the way ~~they~~ was pick up before the Immigration got him. Well, you see he was picked up before the Immigration got him, and return to the camp. And anyway, the--Blas Perez asking for the pink slip for the car, and told him, "You going to work for me to pay me the \$70, but please sign the pink slip to me." Well, he signed the pink slip and start working, you see. We working with him. And I have a pretty good experience over there, because we start tapeando, topping beets, you see. And we are topping beets over there in Santa Maria; but here, because was too muddy, the machine can't go and pick it up--and pick the beets, you see. We going to pick by hand. By hand we use a big machete. You see, they stay in the field because the raining coming real fast or something. We picking by hand--it was real muddy, you see. You got a big machete with a little hook on the end, you see, one hook on this end. And you walking, like bending a little bit, and when you see the beet in the ground, you hook the body of the beet, and you hold it by one end, and chopping all the leaves from the other end, you see. And throw maybe about five feets or two feets away and make a pile, a pile all the way through. And that way--three guys throw to one side, and the other three guys throw to the other side, and someone in the middle is going to make the road, you see. Those is the leader--they working more faster than anybody, and go in the front of it--and that make a road wide enough to drive a truck in between those beets and throw from one side and another to the truck, you see. And this is what we doing--That is what I want to start doing. But meanwhile, we stay about 15 days and we don't do anything. That means it was in April already, or March--

something when it was raining yet around there--around there in Stockton. Anyway, we stay for a while there and don't do anything. And that day we went to try picking beets. And I saw the machete, and I saw the way, the old mans, the persons I telling upon--this is going to be our chance, we are the only young kids around here--that means we going to be champions around in this game. Because like I said, every morning, when wake up all the winitos, they go for a big drink of wine, you see. And they drink it, they eat breakfast, and another shot of wine. And they take to the field--

I: How much did they charge for the wine?

A: I don't--I never find out. One time I have a drink, but I don't think so they charge me anything. But I know the winitos--everyone say--"I owe him abouta hundred dollars," another, "...two hundred dollars"--and they stay 3 or 4 years living right there in that camp, you see. Anyway, we went to the field, and when we started--I remember real good; because I tell my friends, "We going to pass these guys real easy"--but they bend, the old man bend over and start working, and working real hard, and even maybe because we don't know how to do it, how right to do it--and they working real good, and about 9 o'clock, about 10 o'clock, almost maybe those old persons start--a little--they tire, and we start trying to get ahead of them, you see. But I was real tired, and my arm was tired and it hurt me a lot, you see; but anyway I keep moving, and the only thing I wondered is, Why those old persons, they do more faster than myself? And when I almost--I was the same distance with them--Blas Perez come with a big jug of wine, and give another shot to all the guys, and they start all real pick 'em up more faster. Well, that day I was so tired, in the afternoon my arm was real tired, real sore. Anyway, we working about 8 days, and I remember Blas Perez come every morning, you see, or about 11 or 3 o'clock when we are very tired or something, and say, "Eh, you are a young kid, you can be a real good tapeador, but must you do it just like that." And he doing it real hard, you see. "And when you go in front of it, nobody going to push you, you going to push the people, you see. Do it like that." And I keep looking at him, the way he do it; but he only working about 5 minutes and go with somebody else, or go from the fields. We hear a lot of stories about that guy, you see. He was a wino--the way I hear it, he was a wino before, he was a real wino, later on he control about it--

I: Was he born in Mexico?

A: I think he was born in Mexico. And he was a wino, but some lady pick him up, and he make a--. Anyway--. And he don't speak very well English, becomes sometimes we working in one field, and the farmer told him, "Don't working in that field--leave that beets alone." And he told us one or two times, "Move away from that--the farmer, he don't want that beets--leave the beets alone." But we don't do it--we move on in because is not so muddy like another place. And the farmer come and tell him, "I told you, goddammit, I told you to move the people from there!" "Wesh, I know that; I told you son-of-a--?" He try to say, "I told them son-of-a-bitches move away from the field," you see. But he made a mistake and say, "I told you, sonofabitch,, they don't want to move from the field." And the farmer was real mad, and lay off the people, everybody send to the camp because he thought....

I: How was the food in that camp?

A: Well, to me like any other--just the soup--once in a while soup, and every morning two eggs. Like I said, I telling one time to Juan, "You know, we got 20 days here; I got 40 eggs eat already to the present time; 20 days, 40 eggs! Because every morning 2 eggs, and black coffee. Black coffee, and a pot of chile.

I: Who fixed the food there?

A: They have a cook already. Someone say the meat is from dog food--I don't know if it was or not.

I: Did you all live in one big room?

A: They have two big rooms, you know, with beds, one place to another.

I: Well, did the meat taste different than regular meat?

A: To me it was good meat--I don't see much difference.

I: They said it was horsemeat, huh?

A: ~~Hmm~~ Yes. But about the rooms, they don't give to us any covers or something; we just supposed to have our own. Or sometimes use my coat, or sometimes--

I: How much did he pay you there?

A: By hours, I think, I think I don't receive any less than 85 cents, or less than 70 cents an hour.

I: Then you didn't work by piece-work there?

A: No, just by hours. And I working with them for a while. And after some Italian again show up right there with Blas Perez, and ask him for two mans, because he want to clean up one field from grass, Johnson grass. He want to dig up all the roots, and he ask for good labor. And Blas Perez told him, "Okay, I going to send these two guys here--you take them." And every morning he went to the camp and pick us and take to his farm, you see. And told us, "Okay, you guys--you going to dig right here; here is the shovel. Try to dig and follow the root of the Johnson grass, digging 3 or 5 feet, as deep as you can go--but try to pick it up, all the Johnson grass." Nobody--we don't have nobody to show us the way or to--we are alone, both guys alone, you see. We make a big pile of the Johnson grass, maybe we fill up two times a big truck, you see. And sometimes I make a hole 5 feet deeps, trying to follow the root, the Johnson grass, and this is wet dirt, you see, real easy to dig up. And there is nothing to do, just keep digging and digging. Sometimes the guy say, "Hey, you got 3 days already, and _____" And we don't have any clock, just we follow the sun; when we saw the sun almost to the level of the river, I tell him, "Okay, the sun is on the level of the river; let's go." And we waiting for the guy, and later on he take us to the camp. And we working, we make about, maybe we make over--close to a hundred dollars each guy, or maybe--no, 150 I think--both guys, you see. And when we are ready, we went and told him to Blas, "Well, Blas, thank you for the help you give to us, and now we want to pay you the 70 dollars we owe you for the fine of this guy, and return the car." And he say, "No, the car is very good, is nice real small car--is real nice old small car for my sister. I going to stay with the car. Keep the 70 dollars for you--I going to give you the 70 dollars for the price of the car." Well, that's it. This is the end of the small car, you see. And somebody give us a ride to Stockton.

I: Who? Who were you with now?

A: Just with Juan Perez. In that day, when we chopping--when we doing the betebel--you see the real small kid, that guy he bring from Mexico--he was about 15 years old and he don't like to work, you see. And the 1st day or the 2nd day, when got the beet like that, hook up with the machete, and pull 'em up real hard like that, you see, and hit right here straight his eyes with the machete, you see. He almost pull out his own eye; but he make a real awful cut right here. Anyway, he say, "I don't like work; I don't want to go work right here anymore." He told me that he was in the Army, that he was a deserter 3 times from the Army--about 15 years old, you know. And he don't want to work; and

one day disappear from the camp, and that's it. He went someplace. But those days, maybe about two weeks before we leave, another small kid come, show up right there in the camp, you see. He say they call him "Chavo," you see--Chavo mean a small kid or something. He was from Mexicali. But I know very well that they call him "Chato." You see: "Chato come back! Chato come back!" There is a lot of excitement about "Chato come back!" And I say, "Who is that Chato?" Anyway, when I saw that guy, that real young kid, "Oh, this is Chato, eh?" Anyway, we start talking about--he say year-after-year--or he got two or three years--come from Mexicali and work right there in that camp. And then in the winter go back to Mexicali, to his family right there in Mexicali. Well, we start talking, and make real friends, and say, "Well, what you going to do? We not going to stay here in this goddam camp with a bunch of winos. We going to move away someplace or another." "Okay, give me a ride with you, and I go with you, and I pay for the car." Because we tell him what is our plan. This guy and I are together, we going to buy a car, and move on. And Chato, he know somebody around there with carx, and give a ride, just to dump us in Stockton. And they dump the 3 of us right there in Stockton, with a bunch of clothes and things--a small bunch of clothes, you see. And they dump us in front of a car sales yard, you see. Because we want to buy a car--we got 150 dollars or so much. And we bought a 1938 Ford V-8, four doors--beat-up car, for 150 dollars. And that car don't start, and they re-charge the battery right there, and the car start running, and now we start heading back to Santa Maria, you see. The same day we buy the car, start moving to Santa Maria.

I: What month was that?

A: Maybe in April.

I: ~~Now~~ work in Stockton, huh?

A: No. Maybe we are afraid of the Immigration, or we want a car or something-- we are going to go back to Santa Maria, and be ready for the chopping cotton right there in Corcoran again.

I: Why did you go to Santa Maria?

A: Because the cotton is not going to be ready yet. And we head for Santa Maria, and the car start missing a lot on the road--and is not too good that car, anyway. And we keep the car, fixing this and fixing that, you know. And we make an overhaul to the car over in Santa Maria in that time. And we went to picking strawberries in Santa Maria--or in Guadalupe, you see, a real small town near Santa Maria.

I: And did you live in a labor contractor's camp?

A: No, we went to the brothers, the brothers of the religion, the sabadistas--these--. A religion mans--is a Filipino--is a real small group--it was some Mexicans, and the owner of the farm was Filipino; but a Mexican lady was married with that Filipino person. And they were adventists--of the 7 days, you see--7 Day Adventists.

I: How did you find out about them?

A: I think so we went to town looking for a job, and we went to the Hermanos Salas-- brothers Salas, they call them. And we are right there, we start working--. Oh, no, I remember: when we are in town, we find out two other guys--two other guys from Mexico--slambres too; they was working before with the brothers Salas, you see, picking strawberries. And that's why we find out that thing. That way, we are five, you see, we are five together. And we went and live right there with the Filipino. And but the Filipino is the farmer, you see, the owner of the ranch. And about two families of Mexican ~~type~~ persons, and the brother, who is in the religion. And we live in the

house; the five guys, we live in the house. And they give us some food, they make food for us, you see, real good food.

I: You ate in their house, huh?

A: Yes, I did; and they like the food. This is the only place where they like the food. And I started working right there, you see. And the car is missing too much, and we figure it out, the mechanics say, "the car don't have any compression, you need more compression in the motor." Anyway, I tell Juan, "Let's go change the rings and make an overhaul to the motor." "Sure, let's go make an overhaul." And we put 3 sticks, big two-by-fours, and we pick up the motor a little bit, and in the afternoon, after we come from the work, we start working on the car, you see--me and the other guy, because the other guy say he know a little bit mechanic, and I told him I know a little bit mechanic too, you see. Well, we buy the rings, we buy the gaskets and things--and in the afternoon we working on the car. And I remember as soon as the afternoon come, the wind blow from the ocean, and move a lot of sand and dirt in, and I hear the sand and the dirt sound into the cylinders of the car, you see, make a noise. And I telling the guy, you see, "That car is going to be real good, nice and clean, because of the sand--is like sandpaper." We put the rings and everything, finish the car.

I: How much did they pay you there for picking strawberries?

A: By hours, maybe 95.

I: How were the beds and everything?

A: The beds is the same--they don't give to us covers or anything.

I: Oh didn't you have any blankets yet?

A: Yeah, we bought blankets, we got blankets already, but they don't give any blankets or something.

I: Did they try to convert you to their religion?

A: Yeah, they tried. We don't work Saturdays.

I: Did you go to church with them?

A: Yes, we went to church.

I: They took you to their church?

A: Yes.

I: In town?

A: Yes, in town.

I: And were all the people in the church friendly to you?

A: Yes, everybody's friendly to us.

I: Were they Anglos mainly, or--?

A: No, mostly Mexicans. And start talking, and they give a Bible, and start talking about the Bible. And you supposed to get your money Friday before the sun go down, because if you don't get the money, the sun go down, you don't pay nothing.

I: How often did you go to church?

A: Every Saturday.

I: Did you become a Seventh Day Adventist?

A: No, we just went because we have nothing to do. We went every Saturday to them, you see, in the mornings to the morning services. And after the morning services we stay in town, in Guadalupe, or maybe went to the show

or something. And when I was there, I remember one time we went to the show, to the Mexican show. And at that time the other guys, they went someplace else. And I told them, "I going to stay right here in the show. Pick me up after the show." And when I was in the show, the Immigration--somebody went into the show, you see, with a flashlight, and start saying, "Hey, guys--everybody that don't have any papers"--in Spanish--"if you don't have any papers, go for the back door, because in the front door is the Immigration officers waiting for you." And somebody whisper, "Hey, if you don't have any papers, go to that door, because in front is the Immigration!" And start moving the persons, a lot of guys stand up and walking to that door. But I ~~maxxssiiy~~ wasn't willing to do it, I don't do anything, just I stay like that. And later on when I went out from the show, somebody told me, the Immigration he was parked in the back door, and all the guys is going through that door just straight to the bus. Straight to the bus to pick 'em up one by one. That's when we start thinking to move to Corcoran, because start putting hot already over there in Santa Maria. Anyway, we have a good time over there, and do a lot of things, and they treat us real well. And we finish to put the rings in the motor and everything. And after we fix it up, later on--they have a big family, you see, about five kids around there, and start kidding ourselves, "You think so is going to work the motor?" "Sure it's going to work." Johnny said, "If somebody going to invent that motor, why somebody not going to repair that same motor?" And after, we say, "We sell this car, because--we want to sell this car because it got a lot of history of ourselves, you see; this car brought ourselves from someplace," and this and that. And that kid say, "Okay, I give you 50 dollars." "No, this car cost much to you, because it got a lot of history." "Well, take the history away and sell me the car alone." And someone say, "You think so the car is going to run?" "Sure--you not going to hear anything when the motor is running." "Yeah," he say, "we not going to hear anything because of the noise of the motor." And after we fix it up--the battery was dead--we push the motor to start it, but that guy he put--I think he made a mistake, you see; because he put reverse--he try to put the second gear, but maybe he put reverse, and break the whole transmission. This is the end of our car right there. Well, he got money--a little savings--and I give a little bit more money, I think so I give him about 60 dollars more, and he buy a '41 Chevvy. And with that Chevvy we made a trip to Corcoran. And we start chopping cotton, and all the summer we stay right there in Corcoran, you see. And Chato, he are with us. But before, when we are--before, I forget that thing. When Chato was right there in--. When we are chopping beets before--oh in those days he was real sick with appendicitis, you see. Because we living in the car, eating in the car, and sleep in the car in those days. We don't want to be in any camp--

I: After you returned to Corcoran?

A: No, after--when we went from Stockton to Santa Maria, we live for a few days in the car, you see. Living in the car, and eat in the car. And we bought chile, and queso, or baloney. And when he is in the car, Chato start feeling sick about the stomach, something hurt in the stomach. Oh yeah, we thinning beets--we thinning beets right there in Santa Maria before we went to pick strawberries. And he start feeling sick, and we took him to the doctor, and the doctor told him, "Here are some pastillas, some little pills, and later if you don't feel well, you going to ~~be~~ in the hospital." And he don't feel well, you see, he was sick and sick, and I told him, "What you going to do now? What you going to do, Chato? You want us to take you to the hospital? I can sign like your brother, or like your--." The other guy is going to sign like his uncle.

I: Was it a Mexican doctor?

A: No, but we trying to get him into the County Hospital in Santa Maria, you see.

And but somebody must sign for that person, you see. And I tell him, "You got money in Mexicali?" Because he say he got money, or that his parents is pretty well persons, and things like that--trying to acting smart because he live right there in Mexicali. And that's what I find out about the persons that live right there in Mexicali--they figure it out, is real smart persons--because later on I going to tell you something about the things he doing over there* in Mexicali. to the dumb persons that come from the inside of Mexico. "Okay, you got money--or you figure it out you got enough money--you want to go back to Mexicali? I think so we can borrow money someplace to push on the bus and return to Mexicali. But if you going to die right here, and your father don't have any money over there, I think so it is better to die here." I told him right on the spot: "Decide what you want to do. You want to stay here, we take you to the hospital and make the operation here." He say, "No, I don't have money. My father don't have any money over there. Take me to the hospital right there." He was kind of afraid, because like 16, maybe 16 or 17 years old, you see.

I: Did you say you took him to a doctor first?

A: Yes, we took him to the doctor. I don't talk to the doctor, but I know the doctor give him some kind of medicine, and tell him if it not fix him well, supposed to be in the hospital, because it was appendicitis. He was real sick, and we took to the--

I: The doctor said he had appendicitis?

A: Maybe. Maybe. If he keep feeling the same way, is going to be appendicitis. And we took him to the hospital when we find out he is not feeling well anymore--the same doctor told him"go to the hospital, because you got appendicitis." And we went to the hospital, and the other guy sign like his parent, you see--Juan Perez. Juan Perez sign it like a relative of him, and they give him operation to him.

I: Was it free?

A: I don't know if free or not, because later--. And in those days we find out the job over there picking strawberries. We figure it out, Juan Perez and I, meanwhile to--because that guy is not going to be able to work right away, you see--and we went over there--the 3rd day when we went over there to visit him in the hospital, he tell us the Immigration, a lady from the Immigration was there, and told him if he want to be returned to Mexico they going to pay the expenses and everything. And I tell him, "What you going to do about it?" "No, I don't want to return to Mexico; I don't have money--this and that. "Well, what you going to--?"--because the lady told him, "I going to come and pick you up 6 days or 7 days from now," or something, you see. And about 2 days before the Immigration supposed to be pick up him, we take out him from a window, from the hospital--it was in the 1st floor.

I: At nighttime?

A: It was when we went to visit, when we went to visit him.

I: After dark?

A: Yes, after dark.

I: And he climbed out through the window?

A: No, just a small window, just--

I: And all of you went through the window?

A: No, just--. We went to visit him, you see. And we take the clothes for him, you see, we take a shirt and--

I: Oh, didn't the Immigration try to get you, too?

A: No.

I: Didn't the hospital tell the Immigration about you two guys?

A: I don't know; maybe they don't tell nothing about it, or something. But anyway, we take the clothes to him about two days before, and he put the clothes and shoes and everything, and he leave a few clothes he got, you see--those clothes ~~may~~ stay in the hospital.

I: But weren't you afraid to go to the hospital to see him?

A: No, because we went in the night, and we figure it out the Immigration the don't go to the hospital about 7. And we visit to him 7 to 8 o'clock every day. And we give him the clothes that day, and pick him up, and we don't tell him nothing, just disappear from the hospital. We ~~put~~ him out the push window, you see, and we go back out of the hospital and pick him up outside.

I: How soon did he start working again?

A: Well, he don't work maybe for 10 or 15 days, he don't do anything, just walking around in the camp. And we working for him, and pay the food for him, you see. And after--but later on I find out--he live in Mexicali, you see, and cross the border. And he say he like to cross the border every night, he cross the border since he was 13 or 14. And just to go to the camps right there close--when they don't have any money, you see, they walk from camp to camp, and when they find out wetbacks, or alambres, they tell them they are alambres too, that he is an alambre too, and need some money to come to Los Angeles. And because the person is a good person, they give him 50 cents or a dollar, or something; and they return to Mexicali and went to the show and spend the money--things like that. Or sometimes, he say, he come in the nights, especially Fridays or Saturdays, when all the persons went and buy some groceries in the stores, you see. He come camp by camp and asking for food or something, and they give him a lot of food and things like that--and return to Mexicali, you see. And that's why I figure it out--because I know the real Mexican, the person from inside Mexico, we got a lot of feeling or sentiment, if you need something, we are willing to help you, you see. But right there, the persons in Mexicali, they--I find out later on--they don't want to help nobody. Because if you don't got nothing, is because you are dumb, or you are too stupid where you come from. That's why. They figure it out, they don't give you anything right there--the person living in Mexicali, they don't give you anything. And I find that out later on with that guy, you see. We pay for him the food and things like that, we bring back to Coercoran, and he stay with us the whole summer, but he never say "How much was for the--?" I think so we pay over there in Santa Maria for his food and things like that. And more things. We live together, we stay the whole year, you see, living together; but later on he start working and pay for the food. We make our own food right there in the same camp with Roberto Bravo, you see. And later on we move to the--we stay right there for chopping cotton--and after we finish chopping cotton, we clean the cotton, around there, and we ready for the raisins, for the grapes. For the grapes, we move with some family, with the Calderons--remember I tell you the Calderons return to that camp--and I move right ~~in~~ here to Selma, to picking grapes. And I stay with them picking grapes right there in Selma.

I: Were you working for Bravo or not?

A: No. Just somebody else. Bravo taking his camp, or the persons working, over there in Reedley. But I don't want to go working in Reedley, and that's why I come with Calderon--because is a small farmer, you see, and use three

or four families to pick on his own ranch. And I went to that ranch, because I figure it out is more chance to stay with a family. But in those days Juan Perez say, "I not going to stay here, I going to move away to, over there to Victorville." He went to Victorville, and Chato and myself, we go right there to Selma. Well, I picking right there grapes, and I meet a Japanese man, you see, real tough man, and the 1st day--and we picking boxes, you see, because that day we don't have nothing to pick boxes, is already picking the trays, you see, we pick a lot of trays, and after the trays we picking boxes, and boxes for the winery. And they winery, they don't have nothing to help to the man, for put the boxes in the truck. And that man was too strong, because he pick up, one hand, boxes like that, and throw in the truck, you see. And he figure it out I was pretty weak or something, and he say, he tell me later on, he going to make me quit from that job, you see. And right away start saying, "All right, let's go down this way," fast fast, as fast as he can, you see, and try to show me how powerful he was. And I was real beat up. And they pay by hour, you know. And something else: I know they pay me one dollar and five cents to me, because is only part-time, or only for a few weeks; and he made ninety-five cents an hour or something, because he working the whole year around right there on that ranch, you see. And that Japanese working like hell; and I don't want to say "I can't do it," or something, and we working--real tired, in the afternoon I was real tired, and just go and lay down the whole afternoon.

I: Why did they pay you more?

A: Because he got a house, and he got everything, and living on the ranch. And the Japanese say, after he finish working the whole day, dumping boxes and everything, he went and make exercises in his home, and pick up some weights. Well, this is a real tough guy. Anyway, we picking grapes there, and after finish the grapes we move right back to picking cotton there with Roberto Bravo, you see. We went to picking cotton with Roberto Bravo. And Johnny, Johnny Perez say, "Well, I going to move, I going to move away from here; I think so I going to go to Mexico." He going to make another trip to Mexico. And told me why don't I go to Mexico. "I don't want to go, I don't want to wander back and forth to Mexico, I going to stay here; if I going to make money, I going to make it; later on I going to move." And even Frank Calderon help me to open a savings account right there in the Bank of America. And I start sending a few money to my mother, you see, because I--later on she find out--when I was in jail, I send a letter to she, I told her about this: I was in jail, and she no answer me. And later on I find out, she said, "What for you going to be in jail? If I so dumb to get in jail, is because my fault, because I was so dumb, because I got in jail," you see. But in that time, later on I find out they send money to persons over there, and I don't send any to she, and I start sending--I send about 25 dollars a month to she too, to my mother. And right away, about the 3rd time I send money, they leave everything over there and move to Tijuana, because she figure it out maybe is real easy to make money right there in Tijuana, you see. And I know they make--like I told you--I know they make pretty good money in the business, in the restaurant business, you see, right there in the house. Because later on I find out, they make real good money there in San Pedro Tlaquepaque.

I: Well what happened to your half-brother?

A: My half-brother, in this time--because I find out later on, when I return to fix my papers in 1955, I find a record book--they loan money and things, make business, you see--and I find the record book of the income of the restaurant and this and that, you see. And they make real good money, but as soon as my mother receive about 75 dollars from me, she figure it out I

I make a lot of money myself, and maybe she make a lot too. And leave everything right there, even leave my half-brother alone in Tlaquepaque; she leave my brother alone and move she alone, she come alone to Tijuana. And she start talking real bad about me, because I don't send money with my tias, with my aunts right there in Tijuana, you see. And start telling I am a real bad son, and this and that. And later on I find out, because one of the aunts, later on she was mad with all the aunts because no one talk bad about me like she is doing: "Well, he stay here for over two months, and he never was drunk like the way you say; he never was this or he never was that like the way you say; he was here a real good boy, real nice. He want to go in to the United States, and that's why I don't want to offer a job." Because one of those aunts--remember, I told you she wanted to offer me a job over there? "But he say he want to be making dollars." And that's why--

I: When did your mother come up to Tijuana?

A: That means she come up right here in 1951, in the end of the '51, close to the winter--because I picking cotton in that time.

I: Didn't you have any girl friends or anything all this time?

A: No, I don't have any.

I: What were your impressions of the United States all this time? How did your impressions change? What did you think about the United States?

A: Well, in the first place, I figure it out, the only thing I can do right here--. Because the Mexican person was kind of--. I can tell you this much: to me was kind of dumb the Mexican, the way they think the Mexicans around here; they think they can't do much about be a lawyer or be something; they don't--. Like this Frank Calderon; they have a brother, you see, about 3 or 4 brothers in school; and they don't think about be a doctors or be a lawyers or something; they want to think of growing up and going to pick cotton like any everybody else.

I: Are you talking about Mexican-Americans?

A: Yes, Mexican-Americans, pechos. And he say, "Right here is not any chance for a Mexican-American to be a doctor or lawyer, because when you see a lawyer or something--" And once in a while I hear someone to say, "In Mexico they have radios over there in Mexico?" They ask you if in Mexico they know about the radios or we know about the houses or you got cars, or something, you see. And that's why I buying my car, I buy a 1941 Plymouth--old car--a 1941 Plymouth. And Frank Calderon bring me right here to Hanford--

I: Did you buy this car together?

A: No, I buy it myself, from my own savings. I pay about 3 hundred and 50, right there in Corcoran. And Frank Calderon bring me to Hanford and I apply for my driver's license, and I tell them I born in El Centro or something. And I got my driver's license under other name, but I was 21 years old.

I: This was in '51, huh?

A: In '51.

I: Before Juan went back to Mexico, huh?

A: Yes, I think so, before. But later on we move to--right there we move to Lemoore, and we heard--in those days--. But this is January, when they have nothing to do, or in March or in April, when we have nothing to do--we cleaning barley, you see, from the mustasa. And we heard a noise--you walking right here, another man walking right here, another right here, about 20 guys across walking the field to pick up the yellow flowers from the mustasa, mustard, you see--and one guy near us start ~~say~~ telling to another guy, "Hey,

you remember when we were over there in Oregon, we made about two acres of thinning beets by 11 o'clock, or about 3 o'clock we make 50 dollars or 40 dollars a day?" "Yeah, I going to go this year!" And the time to go to Oregon is by May, you know, about the 1st of May or the end of April, because then they start over there. And those days the car, the Chevy, the '41, is break--it start making a noise, and they take to the repair shop, and tell him it is one of the rods.

I: That was Juan's car?

A: Juan's car. But already I have my car too, my '41 car, you see. And it was one of the rods, and they charged 95 dollars to fix it up; but after they fix it up, start knocking another one. And that's why he told me, "Let's go to Oregon; let's go to Oregon to thinning beets and make money for fix my car." And because I know I owe something, a favor to him, that's why I can't say no. And the winter, I remember, I stayed that winter in Corcoran too. And that winter I remember I put rings, I changed the rings and everything on my car, on my Plymouth '41. And about that time I help Frank Calderon to fix his own car--because he know about mechanic, you see. We took the cars--in the winter we took the cars right there in the back of a shop over there in Corcoran--Green Motor Parts in Corcoran, I think. And we working in the back of the shop, we change the motor, the pistons, the rings and everything. First we do the job on his car; and later after he finish on his car, we do it on my car, you see. And that's why I figure it out I got pretty good motor.

I: You say you paid \$350 for a '41 Plymouth in 1951?

A: In 1951.

I: That was a little bit high, wasn't it? You paid too much, didn't you?

A: Yes, sure I paid too much.

I: Did you buy it at a car lot?

A: Yes.

I: You must have made pretty good money; did you pay cash?

A: No, I paid in payments. No, I think I--but I got my savings from the grapes, from the cotton--I don't spend money, much money.

I: How did you get a license? How could an alambre get a driver's license?

A: Just--you don't tell them, you don't tell them you are alambre. In that time, you can get your driver's license in Spanish. And I remember I put I born in El Centro, California.

I: Can you get it in Spanish now?

A: No. You have a license before 1957--in Spanish, yeah; but after 1957 no, you supposed to be speak English.

I: You don't need a birth certificate to get a license, do you?

A: No, just they take your word for it.

I: Why didn't Juan get a license then? He got sent to Sacramento because he didn't have a license.

A: Well, I don't know; but maybe he wasn't real good friends them way--because Frank Calderon advise me to me to get my own license, you see, because that going to help me a lot later on. But anyway, his '41 Chevy was broke down, and because those guys make a lot of noise, they make a lot of money over there, we made a trip to Idaho. (Oregon?) (Juan had gone to Mexico in fall of '51, left car in Lemoore, and returned in spring of '52.) And when Juan return from Mexico in 1952, in the beginning of 1952, he's got another friend--

I: But you were still in Corcoran--you spent that winter in Corcoran?
A: Yes. I spend with Frank Calderon. Because he don't return to the Imperial Valley, I remember.

I: How long did the work last?
A: Well, after December or January there is nothing to do, and we just stay in the camp.

I: When did Juan Perez come back from Mexico?
A: Beginning of 1952--that means maybe in January or February.

I: And that's when you went to Idaho?
A: Yes, when we cleaning barley, we hear about this thing. And by May, I remember--when they change the time--they make the day long, you see--it's in May or in April, you see--and that day we got the radio on, and hear about tomorrow--because we start to make the trip--and I hear a Mexican program that say that tomorrow is going to be a changed time and this and that. And we hear it when we pass by Sacramento, you see, going to Idaho.

I: What did you do from January, when the cotton was over, until then?
A: Nothing, just living in the camp or cleaning barley.

I: How long did you clean barley?
A: Just two weeks, or something like that.

I: But you lived in the same camp. These guys,
A: Yes. And then is when we hear about Oregon--Idaho. /They say every year they went to Idaho and make a lot of money over there, and make 30 dollars by about 3 o'clock, thinning beets. Because you can thin two acres over there, because the sand, because the earth is real like flour, you see--just hit it a little, sandy, real nice, don't have any grass.... And so we went in my '41 Plymouth, me and Johnny and another friend, another guy.

I: Juan Calderon?
A: Juan Calderon no. And even Chato is not with us anymore, because he went to Mexicali, and he don't return yet from Mexicali.

I: You and Juan Perez and another alambre?
A: Yes, alambre, 3 of us.

I: A young kid?
A: No, that man is not young kid--is maybe about my age. And we went to Idaho. We start running for the 99 to Redding, to Redding and--. But when we went to cross the line, we figure it out this going to be a Immigration, a police border. And we try to looking for the roads they don't have any police around, you see. And we went almost to Alturas, right there to Alturas, right here in California. But right there we make a turn to our right, we heading to Nevada; we go into the corner of Nevada, and the corner of Idaho, and return to Oregon--just to go around to don't pass by the Immigration place, you see. We got some dirt roads. And we first saw the 1st time snow--~~mmmm~~ the mountains with snow, you see--and sometimes our car was too cold or something, and stop the car someplace and start fighting with snowballs--the three of us, you see, were fighting with snowballs.

I: In May?
A: Yeah, it was in May--in some kind of high spots over there. And the ice start melting away, you see, and make mud, and because we got real bad roads, and we find out a pick-up stuck with a man and a lady in the pick-up. And it is stuck right there because of the ice, you see. And I pull his car to get it out from that place. And we went to the Idaho, you see. We went in

Ontario, Oregon, to sleep in Ontario, Oregon, and be ready next morning for work, you see. And the thing I find out, after we are there, in Ontario, Oregon--we looking for a hotel to sleep.

I: Why did you go to that particular town--is that where they told you to go?
A: Because Ontario, Oregon, is real near to Nice, Idaho, I think--is real close to the border to Idaho. And around Ontario we hear there is some kind of job, you see. Well, we are ready to sleep right there--but we are real tired--three days or so we made it on the road, you see, about 3 days of sleeping in the car, or 2 days --we were real tired, and want to stretch out in a hotel. We looking around in Ontario for a hotel, you see. And we went outside of the city, and we see a small hotel, upstairs. And when we knock the door in the hotel, and somebody open the door, just a small door--they open it and--just right away open the door, and I told the guys, "Ai!" (We got only ten dollars left--we don't have any more than 10 dollars.) And when they open the door, we go into the hotel, and I tell them, "We not going to have any room around here. And only it is a house, a woman house, you see--after we get in there--about 5 or 6 women show up around there, complete unclothing and everything--and 3 dollars for each guy--that mean we pay 9 dollars right there--

I: Was it nighttime?

A: Yes, it is in the night, about 9 o'clock, we wanted to rest, to stretch out ourselves and be ready to work next day. And this is the surprise. After that we pay the 3 dollars for each guy, and they give a dollar back, and we went and sleep to the girls.

END OF REEL

I was telling you about that night, you see. Maybe we went to Ontario about six o'clock in the afternoon, and we check around those places--and Ontario, and Nice, Oregon, and the towns between, the small towns, because only about 30 miles in between Nice and Ontario, and about 6 or 3 different towns in between. Well, in that night like I say, after we are tired from driving, we went to the hotel, and we have only 10 dollars left, and I told you the story about--. The only thing, I think so--I figure it out I can spend my money like that but--. Like an old joke about the--because one of the girls was a Chinese, and that's what I choose, to find out, you know. It looks a young kid, maybe about 20 years, or something. Anyway, we spend our ten dollars right there--nine dollars--and after we got only one dollar, we went and slept in the car, all the bunch of us, the 3 bunch of us. And next day, with the left dollar, we went and drink some coffee and looking for jobs.

I: Had one of you guys been there before?

A: No, not one of the 3 of us. Just only the names of the towns, you know, we hear down there in Corcoran. Like I told you, somebody say in Nice, Oregon, there is a lot of beets, and in Ontario--places like that. Now we are in Oregon, and we going to check, looking for the camps. We figure it out, the camps is like right here in California, you see. In California you go to any camp, and stay there--you don't pay rent. But later on we find out different over there--over there you pay rent, even if you live in the camp--work or not work. They rent the house, and they rent the bed, and everything you want--and you must pay for everything. That's what I notice the difference. And that day in the morning we went from Ontario--and I remember very well, because in Ontario in those days is only one underpass in the whole city--underpass, the train is going the top of it--well, as soon as we went to the underpass, we going out to the other side, and we saw two Mexican fellows asking for ride. We stop our car--I stop the car, because I remember Juan Perez say, "Okay, levanta--stop and pick up those Mexicans--

I think maybe they can help us." And I stop, and they come up in the car, you know. And the thing surprise me--the 3 of us, we are complete surprise, because the 1st question--they don't say "Good morning," or "Where you going?" or something--exactly straight question was, "Hey, you come from California, no?" Because maybe they saw our sign on the plate, you see--our car ~~was~~ is from California. "Yes, we come from California." "What the hell you doing around here? Everybody say everybody making a lot of money over there in California." Later on I find out they are alambres--they come, a lot of people coming from Texas to those places.

I: Well, where were they from--what part of Mexico?

A: From Texas--they told us on that spot right there that they come from Texas. And everybody come from Texas and work right there in Oregon, because they making money.

I: Oh, they were born in Texas?

A: Yes.

I: Oh they werent alambres then?

A: Later on they told us they born over there in Tamaulipas, in Mexico. Anyway, the question was, they acting like Texas man, you see, or like pochos or something. And because we acting to them like pochos too--we don't tell them we are alambres, you know. Because, after, when I have a car, I never tell nobody I was alambre--just pocho, or from Texas, or from El Centro. Anyway, the question was, you know, they don't tell us "Good morning," or "Where you going?" Just right away, "Hey--somebody say in California make a lot of money. What you doing around here?" And the 3 of us, we saw one each other, and I ask one of them, "Hey, just a minute, there; is not true right here in Oregon you make a lot of money too?" "Who told you? How many acres you can thin a day? You can thin two acres a day? Who told you? Is not true--if you are pretty lucky, you thin one acre a day." "What do you mean? Is not true it is pretty good?" And one of those guys say, "I am a pretty good thinner, and sometimes I make an acre a day, but I must work till 5 or 6 o'clock in the afternoon--from the sun go up, till 5 or 6 o'clock in the afternoon." And I told him, "Hey, just a minute--what the heck! And how much pay for acre--about 27 dollars?" "Who told you they pay 27 dollars? They pay 12 dollars for the 1st--for thinning. And leave 2 dollars for each acre for the 1st cleaning. And if you clean the 1st time, they give you 14 dollars, and the 2nd cleaning they give you another 2 dollars, 16 dollars for acre. But you must stay thinning the 1st time, and the 1st cleaning, the 2nd cleaning--you be careful and don't leave too much grass when you start thinning--you must do 3 times. For every acre you got, you must clean up and everything in order to get your bonus." And we are real disappointment about that deal--only 12 dollars or 13 dollars for acre, and we ask them, "You know some farmer around here we can go--we go to the camps?" Oh no--those guys living in the camp already, and they told us they pay rent, and rent a house, and the bed and everything, and if they want to live right there in the camp, and once in a while a farmer he need some people, went to the camp and looking for some workers--this is the way they do it. Over there they don't have many contractors like in California, you see--the farmer go to the camp and pick up the people he need. Well, they tell us where they going, and tell us, "We going to go and talk to some Japanese man right here in Payette (?)--they give us work last year, and maybe--he got a good home, and a stove and everything, and I think so we can stay with him. Let's go and ask. If you want to, we asking for you 3 guys." Yeah, we went and talk to the guy, in the car, but I was too sleepy, I was so sleepy in the morning because I tired and everything. And I fall asleep in the wheel, and I run outside of the road, and I blow out my tire, my front right tire. And we don't have any money, any extra more money, and I have only just the real

bad spare. We put the spare, and we made it to the farm. We talk to the owner; the owner say, "Okay, the house is empty." That means we are 5 guys living right there--3 of us, and 2 from over there from Texas, you see. And they have a stove--not petroleo or not gas--but to use lumber, you see. And a stove to make cooking or something. Anyway, they got a lot of lumber around, and we start making our food and everything right there in the house, you see. And in the car we have some fry pans, and coffee pots and things like that. In those days we carry things like that in our car, because I start buying things and put in the back of my car. And that way we start working like that the 1st day; the 1st day we went and worked. And I made about half an acre in the whole day; that means only about 6 dollars, I think, 6 dollars the 1st time. But next time I start working a little more faster. And by the end of the week--I remember one Friday I made six whole acre that day, you see. But anyway, the foreman told me I leave too many cuates--you call them cuates when you leave two together--twins--and he don't want twins, so later on--and I leave a lot of grass--and he told me, "When you come and cleaning the 1st time, you not going to finish never--because those rows--you are too dirty for work." Anyway, I keep working, because we don't figure it out to stay--. The only thing I say, "You know something? We going to make a little more money to return to California, or Lemoore or Corcoran, and don't go anymore noplase at all," Because I find out, in farming,--I don't know why, but the people make jokes, one each other, trying to tell them--if you are in San Jose or someplace, you come from San Jose because you don't find any job around, if I tell you, "Hey--you know where I can get a job in the farming?" "Oh yeah--go to San Jose-- a lot of mans working over there--I was working, I make so much money!" you see. I don't know why, but all the people, this is the way acting when you ask them. If I ask you, "You know where I can get some farming work?" Right away, if you are Mexican, right away tell me, in the place you very well know it is not/work at all,/send me to that place. I don't know why, but--

I: Mentiras, eh? O bromas?

A: Yes, just trying to make jokes, maybe. I don't know why, but this is the way. I find out this is anyplace right here in the United States.

I: Because they don't want competition?

A: Maybe it is, but I don't see--I never got the power to send a person with two kids, or 3 kids, just like that, telling they go to San Jose because is a lot of work. Those things--things like that--I start thinking about the way the own Mexican try to knock down his own brother, his own Mexican, you see. Like another deal--if you talk English in front of the pocho, the pocho start right away criticize you, because the way you talk the English is not good or something, you see. But if you talking with some American that's American, they pay attention to you, and maybe the American prize you, because you make an effort to speak, you see. But not with the pocho--the pocho trying to tear down, because you don't speak very well English. And things like that start making my mind do something for our people: one or two things: stop all the braceros and the illegals come to the United States, or do a better protection for--things like that. Because I saw a lot of peoples over there in Oregon, a man with 3 kids or 4 kids; or when I thinning beets sometimes I saw 3 kids in the car, the kids all dirty and everything inside the car because his father come from Texas or from some other town, because somebody told him there is a lot of work there, houses, good houses--it is not true. Things like that, you see. I start thinking about the people, we acting real wrong. And we are an example, you see, because we went from California, because those guys told us we make a lot of money over there in Idaho, you see. And after, I find out, we working about 15 days, or just to make enough money to get the gas, and we get our checks, and we telling good-bye to those guys, and maybe they want to come to California--and we

don't promise nothing, you know, "But I think so we can do better than here in this Oregon." The only difference--. Because somebody say over there is real cheap everything, you see. The only thing I find out a little bit cheaper was--even the gas was about 4 cents more higher than in California. The clothing is higher than in California; the only thing cheaper I find out over there was the eggs, because the eggs is from wild chickens, in the river. And is the only thing I telling Juan Perez, "You see, Perez, the only thing we find out cheap." Because everybody say, everything is cheaper over there. "The only thing we find out cheaper right there is the eggs from the wild chicken." And even the owner of the farm--an old lady was the owner of the farm--she went to the river and pick up the eggs, and sold those eggs to us about 20 cents a dozen, or something, of 35 cents a dozen. That means, anyway, was cheap, according to what we pay in California. Is the only thing we find out cheaper. After that, 15 days later, or maybe 30 days, he say, "Let's go back, I want to go back, we got enough money." We bought a tire, what I needed, and we fill up the gas tank, and we returned. But when we return, I say, "We are so stupid--we come from California, and we are so stupid--those guys send us to find out for ourselves. Now, I not going to make any long trips, looking for small roads, you see, dirtroads, because I want to go by the main highways even if the Immigration get ourselves. You know, maybe that way we learn to don't be so stupid next time." And that's why we keep driving for the main highways. And before cross the border one of the guys told me--not Juan Perez; his friend told me, the name was Jose; Jose told me: "Hey, let's go around like we do it before." "No, I don't want to go; now we going to hit straight to the 99 for California; if the Immigration get us or something, is our fault." And I figure it out, what you going to say when ask you something? Oh, they going to ask me where I came from, I tell them "From over there." "Where you going?" "I going to over there." That is the only thing I going to tell them. Well, we went to the police inspection house, right there across the border, you know, see, on the border of Oregon and California, right there before Alturas. We went to the inspection house, and about two or 3 cars in front of us, and we parking the car right there, when the police come and look us, the 3 of us, and say, "Where you come?" I tell him the name of the town. And, "Where you going?" I mention the next town, you know, Alturas, California. And say, "You have any potatoes or something?" "No, I don't have any, we don't got nothing." "Okay, go ahead." That thing was what it is, and we keep driving back to the--. Well, we don't have enough money for gas, and we run out of gas right there in Marysville. In Marysville in those days they picking cherries. And we sleep, we sleep in the car, and outside the city of Marysville. And the next time we went to the town looking for a job, when we find out a camp, a labor camp, we asking for a job. They told us, is okay, and they give us breakfast in the morning, and send us to work with the contractor, you see. When we went to the contractor, or to the farm, we saw the cherry trees, a big tree maybe about fifty feets high, and the ladders real high too--the stepladders maybe about 16 or 20 feets long, you see. And I remember the guy start telling us, "If you break that tree, you going to pay for the branch you break. If you break a stepladder, you going to pay for it. If you bend the bucket or something, you going to pay for the bucket"--everything, read us the whole deal. And Juan Perez, because he was the guy speak more better English than ourselves, the both ones, we are in back of him, and Juan Perez say, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah." And I told him, about the 5th or 6th or 7th time, I told him, "You know this 'yeah' is 'si'; but in Spanish 'ya' is like 'stop' you know." And I told him, "Ye--callate": "Yay--shut up!" Anyway, let's go work." Angry, we went picking cherries; the whole day we picking cherries, the 3 of us--we made about five dollars, the 3 of us.

Well,

I: Oh, those other 2 guys didn't go with you.

A: No, they stay over there. Because they say they come from Texas, and make money right there, and after they finish thinning beets, return to Texas. But we told them, if someday they come, we leave our address right there--our general quarters was right there in Lemoore with a bar, you see, a Mexican bar, name was Garcia, Ramon Garcia. And we receive our letters and everything right there in that bar. And after we made five dollars, I think so we working about 2 days, or 3 days, to make enough money to--they pay us by bucket, 30 cents a bucket or something, a bucket is hold a lot of cherries, a lot of goddam cherries, and you must pull real easy and this and that, is kind of hard, and you are on top of a 16 feet stepladder, and over there real high, is kind of funny to--and anyway, we make about 5 or 7 dollars a day, the 3 of us. And next day we went again and do it. And anyway, we put together maybe 3 or 4 days and make enough money, and return right to Lemoore. After we are in Lemoore, I think so--we don't went to Corcoran, you see, we went to right there in Lemoore. And from Lemoore we went to a camp in Stratford (?), a company camp, and we working in the camp about driving--as tractor driver, and caterpillars, and things like that, you see. I learn to drive a tractor, and take care of the cotton, and disc and everything the land. Well, we stay right there the rest of the year. And that person, the foreman, was a Portuguese. And he's got a son, built up, a nice built-up son, about 18 years old or 20 years old, and real big man, about 6 feet high, and real tough guy. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~. His father is working like a superintendent of the ranch, you know. And his son was like a foreman.

I: Why didn't you return to the Bravo camp?

A: Because, in those days, we return in May, or in June--sometimes we return to Bravo, but this time we not return to Bravo because, I think so we have better chance right there in that other camp, you see. We going to drive those tractors, be tractor-drivers, you see. And that's why we went over there. And the old man--he's not very old--he's got burned up this part of his face--we call him "Parchado"--and the son is a big boy. Anyway, they told us they can hire us, and they hire us, and they show me the way to drive 'dozers and tractors, you see. I learning, and it looks pretty nice, real pretty nice to the mojados. But later on I find out, the want the mojados, or they like the alambristas, because that way they working us more than the time supposed to, you see; maybe they working us 13, 14 hours and pay only for 12 hours.

I: How much did they pay you?

A: Pretty good--we make about a dollar five, driving caterpillars. A dollar five cents, and they give you the house, and gas and water. But in the morning you supposed to be ready to work about 30 minutes before 6--one hour before 6--because the truck is leaving in different spots, you see. And we leave the camp about 5 o'clock in the morning, we return in the afternoon about 7 o'clock in the night--yet you only receive payment for 12 hours. But anyway, it was--anyway I figure it out it was good for us. And the men that making irrigation do the same thing--sometimes they leave with a lot of water only one man, and I know they were working real hard to those alambristas. But anyway, the alambrista they don't say ~~nothing~~ nothing, because the Immigration or something. But after that, when one alambrista try to make a complaint or something--

I: About what?

A: About the working too many hours. And they exchange words, one each other, you ~~know~~ see. And the father--that thing I find out later on--he don't like they call him "Parchado" you see. Anyway, that person, the alambrista,

he call him, "You goddam Parchado," and the Parchado/~~try~~ grab him by the shirt, and hit him right there straight in the face. I don't see that guy when the Parchado hit him in the face, but I saw him later on with the black eyes, and something like that, all beat up, you see. And somebody say he try to pick up the shovel to hit back to the Parchado, but the son come up from the pick-up with the .22 rifle and hit him right there in the arm, and he got a real bad spot on his arm.

I: How did this fight start?

A: Because he wanted to receive more payment for the hours, or something.

I: Well, who did he complain to?

A: Straight to the Parchado.

I: Oh, he didn't go to the police?

A: No--no no no. Because we are alambres. And he was real beat-up, you see.

I: In other words they cheated you--they didn't pay you everything they owed you?

A: They pay us for 12 hours a day. But sometimes they work us about 13 hours or 14 hours.

I: In other words, they always paid you for 12 hours.

A: For 12 hours a day.

I: Was he the 1st one to complain about it?

A: Yeah, I think he is the 1st. I find out, after that, right there in the cantina in Lemoore--because Stratford and Lemoore are close, you see--when we come to the cantina--. Those things like that,--I start thinking about the way ~~how~~ they treat the Mexicans, the alambres, you see. When I saw that guy, I don't say anything, because someone say, "If I myself was that guy, I ~~will~~ hit him back," or "I do this and that." I never say nothing, just I think about it. And when I come to right there in Lemoore, I hear the pochos laughing about the Mexicans, because they say, "Those guys, they like to hit all the alambres--that's why they want all the alambres in the camp, because that way they do whatever they want." If the alambres, they don't want to do it, they hit them or they do whatever they want to do--or report to the Immigration, you see. But they laugh, they don't do anything. And one time, I remember, I was mad with Garcia--Garcia have a, he don't have a hand, you see, have a hook on the left or the right arm.

I: Who was Garcia?

A: He was a pocho right there in Lemoore, you see. And I talk to him, I tell him about the deal, you see. And he laugh about it: "Oh, that goddam alambre--what for is so dumb?" And I was alambre, you see. When I hear things like that I shut up my mouth. And I figure it out, those persons can do something for the alambres, you see, but they don't do anything. Because they say, "What for? Anyway, the Immigration or the police take away," and they don't want to do anything. And things like that. I start thinking, what can we do about this? Anyway, I stay right there, I hear about two times they hit a different guys.

I: Well, just how did that argument start, when he hit him?

A: Just like---by example, you know, if you are irrigating the ground, you see, and you leave the water go, you can't control the water, you see, and that guy come calling, "You son-of-a-bitch, you not good for nothing!" or something, just calling you names, you see. And you start kicking back, or start making argument, and he right away hit you.

I: Yes, but I mean when the Parchado gave that other guy a black eye--how did that argument start?

A: He complained--I think so for the water--he say is too many water for himself alone, and say 'You are a lazy goddam son-of-a-gun--"

I: I mean that other time, when somebody complained about the wages, the sualdos.

A: The sualdos? Because he want to be paid for the 3 hours, or 2 hours every day, and they start exchange words, and that's why blow up, I think--he call him "Parchado". And other times, like I said, you see, if you throw the water away, he come and tell you names, and calling you "Son-of-a-gun" or this and that. And if you start talking back to him, he blow his top and start hitting you, you see, or something. All the time the son and the father, both guys, you see--never only one alone. Anyway, from that time--they talk to me real nice, and I work for them--but anyway, I don't like the way they acting, like that. I figure it out, What can we do for ourselves, you see? If I go to the Immigration, to the police, it not good anyway, because they going to throw out in Mexico. But anyway, I make a little money, and I keep putting my money in my savings account--those days already maybe I have about 500 dollars, or 600, and I send money, I keep sending money to Mejico, to my mother. I send it for a while, and later on when I find out she come to Tijuana, I stop the money, and I tell her I don't want to sand any more money, because she move to Tijuana--she supposed to stay over there in Tlaquepaque. Anyway, I keep building up my money, and I figure it out, meanwhile if I don't pick up any fight with those guys, and I do my job, and they give me my pay--sometimes I lost 30 minutes or something, but sometimes I stay in the field just to make my 12 hours, or come before--. You know, once I tried to make something--if they leave me stay in the field for 13 hours, maybe next day I don't working for a whole hour or something, you know. I try to pay according to my own conscience whatever--but they never argue, you see. One time, because I do something wrong, I remember when I do something wrong the son told me I was so dumb, and why I don't pay attention to do the things more carefuling--and the only thing I tell him, "Okay, Mr."--the name was Bob--"Okay, Bob, if you don't like it, you don't like my job, I not going to argue with you, because I don't want you hit me, the way you do it with other guys; like I say, you don't like it, give me my check, or just lay me off, and that's it; I not going to talk to you." "Oh, Goddam--" and start keeping talking, and I don't say nothing, I start singing, or move away, try to don't hear whatever he said. But I know I was real mad or something, but I know I going to lose the fight, and I don't do anything. And about 3 or 4 times, different times, when he try to scold me, or tell me things like that, my only answer all the time was, "If you don't like it, please give me my check, and I know you don't like my job and I leave the camp--that's it." I remember the 3rd or the 4th time he tell me, "Oh, you--goddammit--the only thing you know how to say: 'Give me my check, give me my check'!" "What you want me to say? You want me to cry for the job? I not going to cry. If you don't like it, that's the only thing you can do." And that's why I always keep separate from them. And, but, anyway, we the guys know the way they treat us, the way they treated the mojados, you see. And when the mojado left the camp or something--because they hit him or something--the guy told us, the Parchados or Bob, "Hey, you know--go and looking around for somebody, a mojado, sea alambre, or--a big guy, husky guy, that's the person we want right here for our work; because you working pretty good," and this and that. Someone they told me, "Go and looking around for someone." "Yeah, okay." And they fill it up your gas tank, you see, they put gas from the ranch, to go and looking for more persons. And they fill up myra gas for go looking, and I went to Huron--is close, right there, you see. And those days there is ladies' houses

too, with ladies around there, Huron, and--. And sometimes I fall up the car with gas boys from the camp that I took once in a while--I took to Lemoore, to Huron, or to Lindsay. And they pay me a little/for to take the guys over there.])

--they ask

But anyway, I never bring nobody, you see, because I don't want--. When they ask me, "What happen? You don't find nothing?" "No, I don't find nothing anything." "Well, I don't know--something wrong with you--you never find nobody. If I send Juan Perez or I send somebody else, he bring one or two guys." "Well, maybe they are more lucky than myself," you see. But I don't want to put nobody in there, because the way they treat them. I figure it out, some way they going to hit the friend I bring, or something, and I going to feel more bad.

I: Who paid you to take the guys to the houses?

A: The same guys; and sometimes right there in Huron, the lady, the owner of the house, they give me so much--they give me just to use a lady free, because I take about 6 or 7 guys to the house, you see.

I: Did they ever give you any money?

A: No, just once, once they give me that--. Because later on, like I said--the first time, I remember--and I was thinking, I read a book--the thing was, when I found out the 1st two women, you see, and I don't want to do anything. And the 1st time I do it over there, I do it over there in Idaho--the time with the 3 dollars, you see. And later on--because I have in my mind, I read a book, when you got women like that, is like you got a book with not beginning, without ending. Something like that. And I keep in my mind. But anyway, I figure it out, I must to do something, because--. And this is the way I, some once in a while I, like make trips to different places, and--because I--in some places I am the only guy with car, and all the guys they don't have any car I take to the post office, or to town to buy food or something, you see. Even when I was over there in Coreoran I do the same thing. And I make a few dollars for food, for gas, and this and that. And they buy me a lot of cerveza, I think--we drink in the; like in Coreoran, sometimes they bought marihuana; sometimes a lot of persons right there in Coreoran, in those days, a lot of marihuana in the bars and everything. "Hey, you want a cigarette?" I don't want to say no, because they going to find out I was a square or something, you see. "I want a joint, okay." I smoke the marihuana, I acting--just careful--like I was a marihuano or something. Nobody say--everybody say "You are a marihuano," and I say, "That's all right"--just trying to acting not like a square. Because I figure it out, the persons, the pochos, or the pachucos were almost the same--everybody supposed to be drink, and smoke marihuana, and this is the way you are around here. If you acting different, you are a square, or you're from another country. And that way, I don't try to call much attention about it.

I: Well, not many guys down in Mexico smoke it, huh? that guy

A: No. The thing I learned somewhere, somebody smoke because/he was with the soldiers in Mexico with the line--with the Federal Army, in the state of Guerrero. And he start telling me about in Guerrero most of the times--he told me, "Right now the person is always with a company, or two companies in the mountains, fighting with the guerrillas, like guerrilla style," you see, fighting with the banditos over there in Mexico. And say, "What the heck, we are in the fields, we not going to know if we going to live tomorrow or not; just we find out the marihuana, because over there in Zacatecas, close to Guerrero, the marihuana grow in the fields, wild, you see. And if you know what is the marihuana, you cut 3 or 4 leaves of marihuana, and you smoke it the way you please," you see.

I: But most of the farmers from Mexico don't smoke it?

A: No, over there in Mexico--. I find out this: right here in the United States you smoke marihuana to be acting like a big shot, like a big wheel, you see. But in Mexico the marihuana is nothing--anybody can smoke marihuana, if they want it. They don't smoke it, because not expensive, you see--they only about 20 cents a cigar or something--a cigarette--marihuana in Mexico. Is not a business to sell marihuana over there. But I hear it cost a dollar, you see, and is real thin--

I: So more people smoke it here?

A: Yes, because--if you smoke marihuana, according to the girls, or according to--they say "This is a tough guy,"--or something like that, you see. You are something if you are a marihuana. And I find out even the girls go with you more than if you are a square. Anyway, when I was over there with the Pachado, I think so I keep putting money in my saving account, and the Chato--and the other guy return from Calexico, from Mexicali. He return, and I told him, "Let's go and work over there in the camp--I think so I stay right there--. But before he returned--me and Juan Perez, we are living together in one cabin, you see, and we making our food together and everything. And I think so in those days I bought a watch; I paid about 65 dollars, a gold watch, you see. Okay, and I bought another one, a 3 dollar watch for use in the field, to find out what time it is. Well, in those days I leave my clock right there, the 3 dollars clock, right there in my bed. And he pick it up and put it in his pocket and start using it--Juan Perez. Well, the 1st days I don't say anything, but I expect him to use it maybe one or two days, because his clock is maybe something wrong with the clock, and maybe I figure it out 3 or 4 days later he going to leave my clock back, yousee. But after one week or two weeks, he don't return the clock, and I figure it out, Okay, what happen with this guy? And I told him, you see, "You know, Juan; you know, Juan, I figure it out I give you enough chance to buy another clock, because you already use mine for two weeks, and I not going to break mine, this good watch, just only because you use mine." And he say, "You goddam--! You don't know how to feel about the favor I make to you." Right away, he remind me about the favor to bring me from Escondido, you see. And I told him, "You know, Juan, that's why when we are in Stockton, I give you about 70 dollars for the other car, remember? I give you another 70 dollars for that goddam car you have right now. Right now sometime we go to Lemoore, and I pay you for the food, 3 or 4 different times a week; and I never tell you anything, because I try to pay that goddam favor, because I don't want to owe nothing to nobody; I want to be free; I don't want to owe nothing even to my own mother." "No, you don't know how to appreciate," or something like that. Anyway, we break it right there, you see. We keep living together, but we don't talk anymore to each other. And I feel guilty because of the things I do, and--I don't know, maybe something wrong with me because I do that thing. But I figure it out, I trying to pay him, and one way or another I pay already. But anyway, I keep feeling guilty. And I remember, in those days, I think so about 3 days after that thing happen, that incident happen, is when the temblor right here in Tehachapi, five o'clock in the morning or something. I remember, I went outside to start filling up my water bag, when start shaking, you see. And I saw the guys run out to the cabin--he run out, but we don't talking; after the excitement, we look each other like is nobody, and we finish, do our work, and he don't tell me anything, I don't tell him anything. And this is the end of our friendship, you see. Well, after that, when return Chato from Mexicali, I explain him what happen, you see, with the clock. And anyway, he don't say nothing, and I try to prove I not a stingy person; and that guy don't find a job for a while, I give him some food and a home for a while right there in that camp. Later on he start work

work, and after that Johnny left to Mexico, and I stay with Chato right there in that camp, you see. Well, Chato was more young than myself, and start making friendship with --he already was friend over there in Coeroran with one of the brothers Calderon. Anyway, he start make trips to Fresno, to the dance, and when he return, he went from Coeroran to Stratford to pick up that guy and make trips to the dance to Fresno. And they invite me--sometimes I went with them, and start to look around the town with those guys, you see. That means when Blakey--the Calderon brother they called him "Blakey"--that means when Blakey had a girl friend right here in Hanford, and that girl friend find out another girl friend for Chato--and one time when I go with those guys I find out my wife right there in Hanford--that was about the end of 1952. He and Blakey, they got a girl friend right there in Hanford, and the girl friends, they are friends of my wife--the girl who is later my wife. Well, anyway, we went up all together and danced right there in Tulare. After that--I don't care too much about dancing, you see--and anyway, I start coming every Saturday, and take my wife to dancing; to the dance, the 3 of us together. And later on, Blakey left for Imperial Valley, and Chato and I stay together and keep making dates--and he marry with the same girl, you see, and I marry with my wife. Well, we start making trips, right there to Tulare. But in those days, real close to December, about 20 of December, 1952--. And the Saturday before we went to the dance right there in Tulare. But those days--in that time already--I leave my mustache and my beard grow like--I figure it out--like Don Quixote, you see, like a pachuc, you see. I have about 3 or 4 inches of beard, like pachuc. And I was right there in the dance, when a police come to me, and told me, "You got papers? Let me see your ID card." And I tell him I don't have any. "Okay, let's go to jail." And they throw me in jail. And right then my wife--she was my girl friend then--go and sit down someplace. And when Chato saw the police got me, he went out and--. And I left the keys of the car--just when he was in back of me, I pull up the keys of my car and I drop it, the way he saw it, just like that, trying to don't call attention to the officer. He don't notice anything; just I drop the keys and I saw when Chato pick up the keys. Well, they put me in jail right there in Tulare. But those days, already there is a more young kid than Chato, from Mexicali too--we call him "Charrito" because all the time he use the dark clothing, shirt and pants--like the Charro Negro in the Mexican movies, you see; and everybody call him right here the Charrito, you see. Anyway, when I went to the jail I saw that guy, /I saw him in the jail too, you see.

the 1st thing,

"What happen?" "Oh," he say, "this is pretty good you stay with me. I was too disappointment"--the Charrito told me--"I was too disappointment, because I figure it out I going to be alone over there in Tijuana. But now you are, here, we going to be together."

I: Well, was this the Immigration who picked you up, or the city police?

A: The city police. But the city police turn us into the Immigration right away. I think so maybe it is a dragnet for the Immigration or something like that, you see. After we stay Saturday and Sunday in Tulare, and Monday send us to Visalia, and in Visalia they start looking for things--somebody got the driver's license, and the police take away. And in that time I got my driver's license, I fold it up in pieces, and I put it right here in my pants panties--right here, because they looking all over, and I figure it out they don't look right there--in the shorts. And the other thing--I don't have any money at all, you see. Because in that day they don't pay me--and they pay us every 15 days, and 15 days was going to be Monday or Tuesday, and I don't receive a check. Anyway, they throw us over there in Tijuana. And Charrito, he got about 5 dollars. When I was over there in Tijuana, when we are still over there in Tijuana, about Monday, about Tuesday

in the morning, I went looking for my--with my tias, looking for my mother, because I know my mother was there, and try to find out to say hello. I find out where was my mother, and she was real happy to see me--cry and everything like always. I tell her, "Well, I come to say hello, and now I going to try to go back," Because Charrito told me the way we can go back right away, you see. Even we don't need money, we don't need nothing.¹² "Okay, let's go." The soon as we went back, the Tuesday night, we cross the border again right there in--

I: You didn't see your aunts or anybody?

A: Yes, I see my aunts; I went with one, another one, trying to find out where my mother was. And my mother was working someplace over there in the colonias, and I find out, and even she give me about 20 dollars, 20 pesos mejicanos to buy some kind of food. And we bought bananas, and some kind of food. Well, we cross the border right there in the station depot, in San Ysidro, you see. We stay only in the daylight. But in the night a train come from Mexicali and cross to the border right there, you see.

And that's the train we trying to get it--that's what Charrito told me, we going to get this train. But later on we going to get another one--transfer over there in San Diego. Well anyway we cross the border, and when we walking we bought, I think so, about a fifth of tequila, you see. We got the fifth of tequila just for the cold, you see, and then we are ready to walking. Charrito don't have any more clothes, but I have old clothes when I come from Mexico, and I give him another extra pants for cold, on top of the ones he got, or something--two pants and two shirts. And cross the border again, and the tracks is coming the edge of the mountains there in San Ysidro, the hills you see--and back of the track is some deep spot like cañadas--deep, you see--and the track is up high in the sky, you see. Anyway, when we go down right there, we find out about 5 or 6 men waiting for the train by a small fire, with a small fire, trying to warm up, because it was too cold in December. And they have a bottle too, and start drinking the bottle, and we start pass around our own bottle, and somebody come later on with another bottle too; and later on maybe we are a little drunk, all of us; and we start putting more fire, because we figure it out we are too cold; and after that I think so we are pretty drunk--maybe about 10 or 15 guys we are pretty drunk right there, because we make a fire, a big big fire, the flames is go up about ten feet--and supposed to be we are trying to hide from the Immigration, you see. Ah, anyway, the flames is going up, and we are around the fire joking and singing and things like that, you know--singing real loud and everything. Well, about 30 minutes or 15 minutes before the train show up--because the train supposed to be about 11 o'clock, or 10:30--when we looked up and saw all the Immigration was around like that, circle the whole deal. Well, nobody run, because I think so most of us were drunk or something. And, okay, we walking right there from that place--we are only, I think so, about half a block from the border, you see. That means the Immigration the only thing they do is walking us across the border. And that's it. Well, they walking us across the border, and we go around again for the top of the fence, and jump again the fence--maybe we are 15, you see. And maybe when we return, we return about 25 or 30 more--everybody try to get that train, you see. But in this time I tell the guys, "You know, don't try to get it--the train is going to be real hard. You know what I going to do now? Right now, all the Immigration is busy try to stop that train, or try to shaking the train; let's go and get the bus; I think the bus is not going to be checked in this minute." And he say, "Maybe right, maybe." Okay--we cross the border, we come from the top of the hill straight to the bus station depot, and was alone the bus depot; we buy our ticket, we buy our tickets to San Diego, and the bus going up in the same minute the train was over there. And we saw the flashlights, and running people, and the officers yelling, "Hey, he want

that way!" or something. And we were on the bus already, waiting for the--. And the bus went out from there, and we made it straight to San Diego--nobody stopped our bus, you see.

I: And you went right to the depot?

A: Oh no. In San Diego, before went to the depot, there is a big gas tanks--this is our only reference, the big tanks, because close to the big tanks is the tracks, the train tracks, you see. And we got down right there in the train tracks.

I: Oh, they let you off there?

A: Yes.

I: Do they check the buses in the depot?

A: Sometimes. Sometimes they check before, too, before arrive to San Diego, you see. But anyway, we go down right there by those tanks. And walking, we cross the tracks, and we looking for the train, and we saw about another 10 or 15 guys spotted around places, trying to hide, or joking about we are the Immigration or something. Then, the only thing Charrito say, "We got this train--this Immigration don't check this train before Colton." That train go straight to Colton and nobody check ~~it~~ up, nobody do anything." Well, it's okay. We wait for the train, the train to leave, you see; and when the train start moving, we spot our boxcar, the car we going to be in. And we got some kind of rubber thing, you see, like something from the rubber tires, something to put in the door, because some doors, if you don't be careful, they lock the doors and lock you in there for a long time, and somebody say a lot of persons die that way, you see. Well, when the train start moving, we jump to our car, our boxcar, and we leave, you see. And about 20 guys in that special car. Well, start moving the train, and we are joking and talking, and "Where you going?" "Going to Los Angeles." "I go to this place." Well, we don't try to make any noise or telling where we going or what we going to do, Because Charrito told me, "You going to start telling that is more better chance over there, everybody trying to go with you." We don't say anything. And, but next day, some guys start jumping even in Coachella, you see--no, Oceanside, San Clemente--and some guys jump around there. And the train stop about three in the morning someplace, over there in San Clemente or San Onofre. But the Immigration don't check that train, I don't know why. After that it start keep moving. But next morning we are close to Colton, you see, or towns close around Colton. But in some places the road is in between two highways, you see. And when we saw this highway that went to our left, we saw a Immigration police following the train, ~~it~~ you see. And we saw the right hand, and the same thing, you see. And someones, they start scaring ourselves and start jumping, and the Immigration car stop and pick them up, and start collecting all those guys that ~~were~~ jumping from the train. And Charrito went

told me, "Let's go jump from the train." "No, I don't think--we don't have any chance at all." "Well, if we leave the train going into the yard we not going to have a chance," he told me. "Well, we don't have any chance around here either--I not going to jump if I going to break my feet or something--we going to stay here." Well, we stayed there, and we kind of make jokes, because we are sit down right there just looking at the Immigration, you see, running the cars the Immigration, in front of us, saying "Hi," you know. And once in a while we see the guys jump from the front of the train, or in the back, or something, you see. When the train go into the yard, as soon as we are in Colton, inside the yard, the Immigration can go for the same road, you see; maybe he make a turn or something to find the gate. Well, as soon as go in the yard, we jump off from the train

and run, you see, run straight. But he told me, "Don't run over there, because is a fence, a wire fence over there, we can't cross over there--and a big canal too." But I don't run in that direction, I run for the trees--because it is a little foggy, you see--is not too foggy, but anyway a kind of little foggy. And I tell him, "Come on--let's go run on top of those trees!"

I: What time of day was it?

A: Was in the moring, about 7 or 6 o'clock, you see. And we went on top of those trees, and stay like that, and a dog is barking us, but he only pass by, barking us, you see. We are about 10 minutes in the tree, when we saw the police, you see, the Immigration police--but looking just in the bottom--they don't look on top of the tree. (Remember I told you the time in Escondido I did the same thing, you see.) Maybe for an hour, or 50 minutes, the Immigration start keeping passing by once in a while, maybe about every 15 minutes or so, you see. And we are over there in top of the tree waiting, you see. And after we figure it out it quiet down and everything over there--they figure it out they pick up all the alambres and don't show up anymore--we go down from the tree, and he say, "Let's go buy some kind of food or something--do something for eat."

I: How old a guy was he?

A: About 16. And he live right there in Mexical too and make lot of trips, you see. And I tell him, "Let's go and sleep right here in this bridge⁹ is a canal, you see, a big pipe, about 24 inch pipe. And we went inside of the pipe, with the track on top of us, and try to sleep--but we don't sleep when the train pass by on top of us and make a lot of noise. And we come out from the place, and went to the store--no, we don't have money I think so, we don't have much money; we don't went to the store, we went to the orchard, and pick some orange, for eat, you see. And in that minute, when we are eating orange and trying to rest, we saw an American man come and talk to us, you see. But he don't say anything, just say hello and a few words more, and leave. And I tell him, "Let's go, because this guy maybe going to report us to the Immigration or something like that--let's go to our place." Because from that place we are, we can see the orchard, you see. And we return to our place, and hide in the same spot in the bottom of the track, and we saw ~~in~~ later on pass by the police car, you see. Maybe he report us, or maybe is just the police checking. We stay right there in Colton until 5 o'clock in the afternoon. The only signal we got, to find out what is the train we want, is they are going to put two engines in the train, you see, because that train is come to Barstow--from Colton to Barstow. Well, is made up the train--when they put two engines, you see, "This is the train, let's go!" Well, we jump in the train; that time we made it in an icebox. And the ice cars, they have a small door in the top in each corner of the car for put the ice. And we went through the top, and that car is empty, you see. But anyway, we must keep open, because sometimes if that door is locked--somebody died like that, you see. Well, we are in the icebox, and start the train moving away--. No, that time we are not in an icebox, we are in an open gondola--we call it gondola, for dirt, you know. And there is a few dirt, or sand, in one side. Well, we lay down in the sand, and start moving away from Colton, you see. Well, it's dark in the road, and there is some kind of accident, something happen to the train, you see--the train stop, and the brake is burn up or something². Anyway, as soon as the train stop--and we saw the sand start to drop in the middle of the car, you see, and we are lay down in the center, you see, and we start going down, down into the sand. And the guy, Charrito, my friend--he jump out to the other side. He say, "Come on! Come on! Get up! Get out of the way from there!" "No, no, don't

move! Let's stay here! If I jump where you are, maybe we'll fall in the hole or something." "No, no--" And we find out in the place he was, the boxcar was broke down, and start the sand fall out right there, you see. And I think so that night was Merry Christmas night, you see--Christmas night, you see. Anyway, after that thing happen, the train is stay like that, but I keep telling the guy, "You see--maybe something wraig with this train, because most of the time we are driving to the east, we straight driving to the moon--I think this train is not going to be over there in Barstow, or in Bakersfield--this train is going to be in Reno or Nevada--someplace like that." And that wasqin my mind, about it. And he say, "No, this is the train go to Barstow, and from Barstow to Bakersfield." Anyway, when that thing happen, we are shaking, real cold, you see, because we don't got much clothes on. And before the accident happen, we have two paper bags, two paper bags with our own food, you see. But after we finish the thing we got in there, we make two holes in front of the paper bag, and we put it over the head, you see, from the top, and we are covered the whole deal, we don't have any cold in our ears, you see, or in the face. And after the train stop, we waiting to see what it going to do. And when we saw a light, someone come walking, you see, maybe we figure it out is somebody from the train. But you see, when the man was close to the place we are, I jump from the train car, to the ground, you see. And maybe about 20 feet away or 25 feet away from the guy come walking, his light. When that guy saw somebody jump on the ground, he put the light like that, shine at me right away, you see. And we saw me with my mask in front of it, or something. And I notice him, I notice the light, he scared or something. And right away I ask him, "Hey, you know what is the place we are?" And I forget I have the mask on, you see, I forget to take it off. And he say "I don't know, goddam son-of-a-bitch!" and this and that. And after he callme sonofabitch and this and that, I tell him, "Okay, thanks a lot, boy." And about that time, when I tell him "Thanks a lot," he already pass me, and keep walking, you see. But when I say "Thanks a lot," he turn around and shoot me the light again, you see, and keep walking. And later on, because the way he answer me, I start telling the other guy, I was disappointment, because Why people acting like that? you see. But later on I figure it out why he acting like that, you see, because he was aseared--and I remember about the mask and I take it off. And he was mad because I scared that guy, you see. And we are in front of maybe a gas station, because maybe about 50 yards away was the main highway, and I want to see the name of the highway--I saw the filling station there, you see. And I tell the guy, "Wait for me--I going to run to that place asking for a map--I'm pretty sure this gasoline station got the name of the town, or something. I try to find out where we are." I run to the filling station, and I'm asking to the guy for a road map, and he--real friendly--"Where you going? What you doing?" And I tell him I come on the train, I tramp on the train, and this and that, and he give me a road map, and told me the name of the town, and I ask him where the train is going, and he told me, "That train is going to ~~Mass~~ Barstow." Anyway, he told me, and give me a road map, you see. And I find out where we are. And after I leave the gasoline, "Well, thanks a lot for the road map." He told me, "Okay, good-bye and happy merry Christmas!" And that guy, I was surprise, you see, the difference from one man to another. And, well, I says, is life, I figure it out. And I went to the train, I telling the guy, "We are on the right place." About 3 o'clock in the morning, we jump off from that train, because is already are in Barstow. We jump off from the train, we move to some other place, waiting for the other train to move from Barstow to Bakersfield. When we are waiting for the Bakersfield train, because of the cold I get some cramps in my feet. You see, I start cramping my feet and I can't walk. And when we run to get the train, when I got up on the train, I feel the cramps real bad in my

arms, I still hang up from the car, you see. And the other guy grab me from the hand, and just get me to go inside the car--and end up that time we made the trip in the boxcar.

I: How long did you have to wait in Barstow?

A: Just about two hours or so. Because maybe we arrive about 11, or 2 o'clock in the morning. And about 3 o'clock in the morning the other train pass by. You see, and we jump, and we get it. We come--we wake up in Bakersfield in the morning. And in the morning, right away the train is made up to Fresno, or heading north, you see. We start looking for a boxcar or something--when we figure/the train is going to start moving, it out

we start looking for our place to make it on that trip, you see. And when we try to open a boxcar, I saw another American guy from working on the train, and he told me, "Hey, hey! No, don't! Go back! Over there--back!" I say, "Why?" He say, "That has got--is full up with ice." He trying to make me understand is full up with ice, is closed for refrigeration and everything, you see. And he told me to go back, in the back there is some empties, or something. Anyway, when I tell him "Thanks"--I say "Thanks." "Okay. Happy merry Christmas!" And that way we make it from Bakersfield. We pass by right here in Hanford, try to jump off from the train, but the train was too fast, and I tell the guy, "No, I don't want to jump right here--let's go to--the goddam train slow down over there close to Fresno--and at Fresno we jump off from the train." When we jump off from the train, we walking about two miles, to some farm, and I asking if they let me use the phone to call me a taxicab. And they call a taxicab, and pick up right there in Fresno, and bring us to Stratford Ranch, because I figure it out I got my paycheck at Stratford ranch, you see. Anyway, I telling the taxicab to drive to Stratford, and I pay over there. Well, the taxi charge about 25 dollars from Fresno to Stratford, you see. Well, I go down from the train, and Chato was so happy to see me, I saw my car. And I asking, "What are you telling to my girl friend?" "Oh, I just said you leave, and she figure it out anyway it was the Immigration anyway, or something." "Well, that's okay." I went for my check, and I pay the taxi the 20 dollars for me--for the fare for me and the other guy, you see. And that winter we start living there--that mean was in December, you see--because in the night I come and talk to my girl friend--now my wife. And she ask me what happen, and I made a lot of stories about it, and I tell her about my name, and things like that. Anyway, one thing she ask me, where I'm born, and I tell her in El Centro, and she don't say anything else. But later on she told me that she figure it out El Centro, California. And some persons around, when they ask me where I'm born, I tell them El Centro, but if keep on ask me, "El Centro--what place?" and I say El Centro in Mexico, you see.

I: Well, your wife thought you were born in El Centro, California then?
A: In El Centro, California.

I: Why did you tell her that the police were after you, then?
A: Well, I make up a story about my name, because I told her I got my name changed, you know, and things like that, you see. And they hold me up only for investigation 4 or 5 days, or something.

I: So she still thought you were born in California?
A: No, I think she find out later on I born up in Mexico--or at least I raise up in Mexico, you see. And when we are on dates, she and I we talking about the books, and about--she told me she finish high school. But the way the girls acting, the way--the education, the liberal education of the other girls--I don't figure it out was too much, you see. Or they don't pay much attention. When I talking about classic books, or about something,

the other girls don't say anything. And Carol sometimes I telling about the--if she know a little bit about Latin, and she got a little knowledge-
ment of Latin too, and this and that--we talking like this. And we talking
about how it is to read a good books, or something, you see. And maybe
that's why she asks me to marry her. But anyway, later on I told her I use
another name, because of this and that, I have a pasaport over there in
Mexico, and I born in Mexico and things like that. ~~anyway~~ Anyway, we keep
going together like that. And but meanwhile, those days--Chato got a fight
with the Parchado. They don't hit one the other. I tell him, "Don't fight
with those guys, or they don't hire you. If they want to lay you off, we
leave the whole ranch the 3 of us together." Because again we are 3 of
us--Charrito, Chato and myself. And Chato, he don't have any money, because
he return from Mexicali--everytime he went to Mexicali, leave all his money,
everything, his belongings, he come alone again. Well, in that day he
fight or something, and I tell him, the Parchado, "Okay--I going to quit."
And that's it.

I: Were you working in the cotton again?

A: No, was in December--we working--I think so irrigating, picking cotton--they
don't have much to do around. We left the ranch, we come live right there
in Hanford. Not onlybecause we want to leave the ranch--maybe because we
want to stay more close to our girl friends, you see. And then not many
jobs around, anyway, because was in December or January already. Well,
start living together and making double dates, yousee, the three, because
I am the only one that have car. In those days I change my car, my '41,
for a '48 Ford. A '48 Ford, and I make payments of 60 or 70 dollars a
month. And my saving account--I have about 900 dollars in savings, you
see. And anyway, I rent a house, for the other two guys and myself, we
rent a house and living in town rightthere in Hanford. When we live in
town we are alone, you see--start go around with the pachucos or the pochos
around the town, and the real mariuanos--and ~~sxt~~ they start offering mari-
huana to me, and start offering to Chato, and we smoke trying to acting
like those guys, you know. The only thing--the only funny thing I dis-
cover, you see--we buy, later on we buy our own cigars of marihuana, you
see, try to show we got our own marihuana. One time we driving right there
~~and~~ on the main street--in the winter--and the other guy; the
real marihuano, say, "Hey, you don't have any matches?" "Yeah." I give
him the matches, and he lighted the marijuana cigarette, you see, right
there in the main street, right inside of my car. But all the windows is
rolled up and everything. Well, we start smoking marihuana like that, and
everything like that, then. But I notice this; when the person is on
marihuana, they don't want to run the car real fast--they afraid to run
the car fast. And I remember, because I tell them, "I not a marihuano--
now I going to run this car real fast." And I start speeding, about over
50, and the other 3 guys, the real mariuanos, start get scared like heck:
"No, no, no!" and shouting like everything, I was too fast, and this and
that. And they say, "Let's go buy some wine, to take me off the mari-
huana and put me some wine," you see. And sometimes they change--if a
real marihuano drink too much wine, and later on you are real drunk, but
not any more marihuano. Well, I start going like that, and I find every-
thing, and I stayed right there. Till, later, from Hanford I move to
Lemoore--and I meet a lady from Oklahoma--alone, you see. But in those
days I was almost ready to marry with my girl friend, with Carol. And
the girl from Oklahoma start talk to me, she told me, "Don't marry,--because
is going to be a lot of kids, and that's why we go together to someplace
else.

I: Did she speak Spanish?

A: No, English.

I: Pretty girl?

A: Sort of. But I think that later on--. She come from Oklahoma with an Indian guy, you see. And I find out later on a lot of things about her--

I: Was she a prostitute?

A: Something like that.

I: How old was she?

A: About my age, about twenty-some. In those days I almost--I was ready to marry with my wife, you know. And that means it was pass by May--after May we chapping cotton together, around Lemoore, you see.

I: Did you still live in a house of your own?

A: No, we move in to Lemoore later on, to a hotel in Lemoore. And this is the place I met that American girl. And working around Lemoore, and the nights come, and talk to my girl friend, you see. Chato, he leave for Mexicali, and told me, he going to pay me the money we spend in the winter, you see. Because we spend about 200 or 300, the 3 of us together. And he say as soon as he return, start making money, he going to pay me. Later on I find out he don't pay me anything and I was real disappointment about it, because I figure it out I lost a few savings, when I can do a little bit better than that thing. And I was real disappointment at the friendship of that guy, and the other one. And that's when I decided I marry my wife or get a pata (?)--forget all my friends, you see.

puta?

I: She knew you were born in Mexico now?

A: Yes, I think she--. I made some story, but she knew--. And my wife made a trip--in those days she made a trip to Hollister--she and her family, all the family together, to pick apricots, you see. And she told me where is the place going to stay, something like that. Anyway, I went with her to Hollister. After 15 days or 8 days stay over there, we went and married, right there in Hollister, you see.

I: That was 1952?

A: 1953. In August--13th of August, 1953. We married right there in Hollister, but under other--she told me "Change, put your real name." But I told her, "What for? Under this false name I got my driver's license, and I got the things I got. I don't think so I need my real name. What for? I don't want it." And maybe she try to give me help, see, if I want to fix up my papers, but I tell her, "I don't think so I going to fix up my papers because of my pasaport and the things I do wrong over there before." Anyway, I don't change my name, I marry under the name of Juan Garcia, by you see. And I was afraid to--maybe right there maybe they going to get me the Immigration or something--and I think so in front of the courthouse I want ^{DON'T} to go inside into the court to--. After we got our license, the permit to marry and everything, I don't want to get into the court to see the judge for marry us, you see. And my wife said, "Okay, let's go! What you going to do? You want to marry or not?" And I was afraid--not only for I going to be married, but only about my name, and things like that. I figure it out is going to be a big step, or something. Anyway, I make--make power for myself, and I walk into there, and we get married.

I: Are you still married under that name?

A: No. But then I marry under that name, and my 1st girl born up under that name, you see. Because we stay right there in Hollister picking apricots; after we finish picking apricots--

I: Did your wife pick apricots too?

A: Yes, she help me. And we are together, the family--her family.

I: Then you lived with her family?

A: Yes, I live with her family. Then, after we finish picking apricots, we move to some orchard, a small orchard to pick plums. And when we picking plums, my wife and I, we are alone, you see--and her family, two sisters, and one brother, and her mother, and a small brother, you see, about 5 or 6 together. In the plums, the more hands you got to picking, the more money you make, you see. And we start working together, but I notice, about 5 different times, her brother leave me the trees got less prunes, you see. And I tell him, "I not going to stand for this kind of shit--I not going to pick all the trees you don't like! If you don't like those trees, if you not going to pick 'em, I not going to pick with you, goddammit!" I told him. And his mother try to defend her son, you see. And I tell her, anyway, "I not going to stay this way; I going to quit right now, and right here--I go back to Hanford," and I telling my wife, "Let's go. You going to stay or you going to go with me?" I think so that was about 5 days or 10 days working in the plums, you see. We got so many--about 40 or 35 dollars together. And even I don't asking for my pay, you see, because we are under only one name, you see. And I leave everything, and I put our things in the car, and I bring my wife and everything to right there, to Lemoore, you see. And I come to Lemoore with only 10 dollars, and my wife--

I: But didn't you have money in the bank?

A: Yeah, but I don't have much money, I think so, because I keep spending, and payments on the car, and this and that. I think so maybe I have only 50 or 60, or 100 or something in the bank. Anyway, when I arrive there in Lemoore, I make a decision, what I going to do now? I going to live right here working, or try to went to the camp over there with the Parchado. I figure it out, I never return to that place again, you see. When I leave a place, I never return. But this going to be my 1st time to return and asking for a favor for a job in one place where I leave. And I decided, better driving tractor than picking cotton, or do things like that. I went back, and asking for the job, and he told me, "It's okay, come on. Here is a tractor--you going to drive a traector."

I: Did he own the ranch, or was he just a contractor?

A: He is a superintendent of the ranch, and his son was a foreman. Because it was a company. I went to the ranch, he give me a cabin again--he give me the cabin for me and my wife, and I find out right there was Juan Perez, and the other guy, we made a trip to Oregon with, and a lot of alambres--all of it is alambres, you see. And only the Parchado and his son and another small Portuguese was from right here. Anyway, we start living right there, and I don't have much money. We start buying some things for building our furniture--and buy our furniture, you know, old chairs and things like that--second-hand things we start boughting. And we start living like that. And that same year, I think so, in that same year--maybe was in May or in June or July--after the cotton season--because I think so I was working in the 'dozer--I come real dirty from my job, you see--I working 15 days night and 15 days day, 12 hours a day--

I: Did your wife work too?

A: No, my wife she was in the house. And this is the way I stay for my honeymoon. And that time, I come from the job, and I want to take the shower to quit the dust, everything. And my wife told me, "Don't any water in the showers, is something wrong with the pump, with the water pump." I tell her, "No wonder everybody's taking a shower there in the canal"--about a quarter of a mile away from the camp, you see. "Let's go take a shower over there,"--because maybe those guys come already to make their own food, you see. And we went taking a shower--stay over there playing in the water for a while, taking a shower. And we come--when we return we find out that goddam camp alone, complete alone, you see. All the sabins open--I went to one cabin

and open, and ~~span~~ saw the tortillas--and some place even the stove was burning, you see, and the tortillas and everything. Like everybody move away when they are eating, or when they are make some food--. When I--I--, I went in one cabin and saw that thing, and another the same, and another the same. "What happen around here?" I asking to the foreman. "You see, the Immigration come and take all of them, take everybody. Everybody is gone. Only stay the Parchado, his son, and the other Portuguese--three persons. And me and my wife.

I: I wonder why they didn't turn off the stoves?

A: I don't know--maybe the excitement or something. And as soon as I arrive from taking my shower, I saw the buses going away, but I don't pay much attention about the buses, you see. Anyway, he told me the Immigration went over there and take everybody away. Well, in that case, he told me that tomorrow you not going to--. Because I remember, in those days I was doing something with the tractor in the cotton, working the cotton fields, you see--when the cotton is small, you make--with the tractor you make little circles or something, you clean, you see, with the tractor. And he told me, "Tomorrow--because I got the water running in the fields--you going to change the water tomorrow, and then go and looking for mans, because I need some mans real bad, because you see all the water is running in the fields, in the cotton." "That's okay. But how much you going to pay me, for irrigator?" "I going to pay you 85 cents for irrigation"--that's what he pay. "No," I tell him, "is not good for me, because, "I driving the tractor, you give me a dollar five. And now you going to pay me 85 cents because I going to be in irrigation?" "Well," he said, "this is the way you supposed to be paid." "No, I don't like it that way." "Anyway--you going to help me or not?" "Okay, I going to help you. I going to help you, but even I don't like that kind of deal you trying to give me, you want me to do it." And I start change the water. And about 12 o'clock he told me, "Come on, let's go to the ranch, and I going to fill up your gas tanks, and go looking for mans." "All right," I telling my wife, "let's go taking a ride." And we taking a ride to Huron, but or we coming to her family right there in Hanford. But I never looking--I don't remember ever telling to anybody if they want to work over there--because I am thinking: Now they going to feel what it is don't have any people at all, you see. And I stay like that--I don't find any. I tell him, "I don't find anybody." I don't try to find anybody--I just use the gas, you see, I running my car back and forth in different places. I take my wife to the show right there to Huron, or to Fresno--we are together to Visalia, you see--just we are alone. But anyway, I asking to nobody, you see. Even if I saw somebody in the street, never tell him "You went to go and work for the ranch I working?" or something. And later on--but that winter, some person from Madera, two pochos from Madera, they come and working in the picking machine, picking cotton machine, you see. And those two guys they brought their sister to the camp to make their food for those guys, you see. And one time the Parchado is right inside the house, telling, "Goddam, why don't you go to work?" And, "The machine is waiting for you!" In English, you see. And they figure it out that he don't speak Spanish, that he don't understand Spanish, the Parchado, because one of the brothers say, "That son-of-a-bitch"--in Spanish, you see--"that son-of-a-bitch! What he think he is, come inside the house just like that?" When heard that thing, the Parchado, in Spanish--he understand Spanish--he grab the guy by the shirt--because I think it was his favorite thing, you see--grab the guy by the shirt, and drag him out from the cabin, you see. When he

drag him out from the cabin, ~~xxxxxxxx~~ the other guy, the other brother, pick up some big wrench, and run to hit the Parchado on the head.. But in the same minute, the son was outside, and he grab the goddam .22--like always he got that .22 in the pick-up, you see--and just right away he put the gun in the stomach,~~xxxx~~ "You just leave the--lay down the goddam wrench!" And the Parchado start hitting, beating up the other guy.

I: How old was the Parchado?
 A: About 45--about 50 or 45.

I: A big man, huh?
 A: Yeah, big man. And start beating up the other guy--blood from the rifle, right here on on the forehead, of the other brother, and he can't do anything, you see. And I saw the thing, and--

I: Well, they were pochos--they could have gone to the police.
 A: Yeah, I think so they went to the police. Or maybe they don't went to the
 ? police.

I: But they left, huh?
 A: No, I think so they stay there--they don't say nothing. They stay right there on the job, keep working for a while. Later on--later on when I leave the camp--after I find out the Immigration--that thing happen like that--I don't like it, and when he put my salary--lower it to 85 cents--just I tell him, "Well, thanks for your job; I going to leave now."

I: Didn't they get any more men?
 A: Just once in a while--later on came more alambres. But anyway, I never was satisfied, because I keep in my mind the way they do it, they take away my salary, they lower my salary. for a while--later on raise it up again. But anyway, I keep in my mind like something they do against me. Anyway, later on I telling those guys I going to leave the camp because I going to move to someplace else. They say, "No, Pablo, stay with us--you are a good worker," and "you this and that," And, "No, I'm sorry, but I going to move away"--I don't tell them exactly what for, but I tell them I going to move away. And I leave the camp and I come to live again with her parents, my wife's parents, right there in Hanford. But anyway, I was afraid of the Immigration--. I came and stayed for a few days in Hanford, and later on I move to another camp right there in Stratford. And we are in Stratford, close to Huron, you see. And later on I move more south of Stratford, more south to, like Kettleman Hills, another camp right there on the 41, and the 98, on the corner, you see. And that day was Christmas, we come to see her family for Christmastime, the wife's family, in Hanford. And the next day when I returned, the Immigration hit that camp, everybody is gone too. And that's when I made my decision, don't stay anymore in camps, and I come to Hanford and keep living at her parents', you see. Those two times, the camps I leave and the Immigration hit it, and I not was in the camp when the Immigration arrive. When we are in Hollister, about two times, two different times in different places, the Immigration show up, but most of the time I was riding in the car, you see, and when I saw the Immigration I keep riding, like looking for someone, and move away from the camp, you see. Well, after that--it was December--and I figure it out I can't stay like that anymore. And already it was December of 1954, because my 1st girl born up, born already, Amada. By December, 1954, when that thing happen over there, I think my wife is already expecting to the 2nd child. And she told me, why don't I try to fix it up my papers? And I tell her, "I don't think I can, because of this and that. If I going to fix the papers, I going to fix under, under--I not

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going to tell them the truth. I was thinking, I figure it out to myself, the only way I figure it out is, if I keep saying lies I going to fix up my papers. But if I say the whole truth, they not going to give me any papers at all. Anyway, in those days is Leo Lomalee--is the name of Leo Lomalee famous everyplace around here in the Valley. Leo Lomalee--the name of Leo Lomalee. Leo Lomalee was a notary public or somebody to fix papers. But the man, he got a lot of names. All the radio stations announce, "You got an Immigration problem? Go to Leo Lomalee." And he got an office right here in Visalia--they give you address right there in Visalia, they give you some other address in Bakersfield, they give you some other address in Fresno, you know. He start putting branch for all California--he try to control the whole Valley--that coyote, you see. And all the Mexican radio stations, you hear, "You got Immigration problems? Go with Leo Lomalee."

I: And he was in Los Angeles, huh?
A: The central is in Los Angeles.

I: What was his real name?
A: Leo Lomalee. His office was in 255 South Broadway, in Los Angeles. And, well, my wife is telling me, "Why don't we go and talk to Leo Lomalee right there in Visalia, and find out if we can find out about your problem?" "Okay." We made a trip, and maybe was in January or February, 1954, when we make a trip right there to Visalia, and I talk to the guy, you see. And I tell him, "What is Leo Lomalee?"

I: Was he a lawyer, or just a notary public, or--?
A: No, right here is only a notary public, or somebody in charge of the--. I tell him what my problem was, and I tell him, "You know I got this--I like to know if you can do something about it. Who is Leo Lomalee?" and he told me "Leo Lomalee is in Los Angeles. I working for him now--what is your problem?" I explain my problem, and he told me, "Why you don't make a trip to Los Angeles and talk to him? I think so he can fix you. He fix the papers for everybody," and this and that. ~~fixing~~ And we return, and I telling, "What you think?" I telling my wife. And my wife was with me, telling, "Let's go to Los Angeles and find out." We made a trip to Los Angeles and find out, you see. When we are over there in Los Angeles, we trying to find out the Broadway--my wife was before in Los Angeles--but 1st I made a big mistake myself, I figure it out the street that say North supposed to be a straight street or a straight roads going north--not like in Los Angeles, make east and say north, and things like that, you see. And that's why I was complete lost for 30 minutes, and because I follow the instructions of my wife, "No, I was here two years ago, I know this place," and this and that, and she not able to follow north or south, according to the streets. The soon I find out she can't do anything like that, I went to the filling station and get a road map, and I study the road map, and I find out where I am, where I going to be, and this and that. And I told her, "Okay, you just look for the streets, and tell me when the street show up." And this is the way I find out Broadway, and I went to talk to Leo Lomalee. And Leo Lomalee, he got about two secretaries in the office, you see, and a notary public--name was Dolores Torres. Well, I talk to Leo Lomalee, explain my problem, you know. I tell him, "I have a pasaport, a local pasaport under my real name. Now I am married under this name, I have my children under this name--what do you think I can do about my problem--you think so you can fix it?" And he call in Dolores Torres, his--the wife of Leo Lomalee, you see. And tell her, "Hey, Dolores, what do you think about this problem?" Dolores say, "Ah, it is going to be a hard case." And she say, "But for \$500 we fix it." "Why?" say ~~Dolores~~ the wife. "You can't fix it for \$500." "Yes, we

can fix it." And his wife say it is going to be real hard, or maybe she not can fix my case, you see. If not can fix right away, the way she want it, because I supposed to be receive some kind of punishment, to stay in Mexico for maybe one or two years, you see. And after one or two years maybe they can give me my pasaport, but not before. That is what Dolores Torres say. And Leo Lomalee say, "No, we going to do it this way," and start explaining the whole deal in front of she. He say, "You know, you born in Jalisco, no?" "Yes." "Okay, you go to Nogales, and you going to say you never come to this country through Tijuana. You never going to mention nothing about San Ysidro. You not going to mention about you was in the corralon. You going to mention that you use other name, but no mention the things happen to you in San Diego or in San Ysidro or about your local pasaport in San Ysidro. Don't say anything. Just you come to this country, say you cross from Mexicali or something, and now you going out through Nogales. Anyway, your port of entrance is going to be Nogales. That means you go straight to Guadalajara, and in Guadalajara you fix it up your papers, and when they ask you for what place you want to go inside to this country, ask for Nogales." Well, the plan sound right to me, and I figure out is a workable plan. And I tell him, "Okay, what I going to do?" "Okay--how many you got to give me a down payment--because I don't think you got the 500--you got the 500 is okay to me, is better for me." "No, I don't have the 500, but I have only about 50 dollars in my pockets right now, and I don't have any job at all--what you going to do?" "Bring me the 50 dollars. And you know what I going to do right now? To start it right now, we going to do this: right now you go and marry right here in Los Angeles County"--that was February 10, 1955. In the same day, we went and married right there in the town. And even one of his mans--because he got two secretaries--and one man working for him, you see--and one of that man is work for us like witness, you see.

I: Don't you need your birth certificate?

A: No. For marriage, no. Just we went to the--anyway, that same day--or maybe we stay one day and the next day--they take the blood test one day, and next day we marry, right there in Los Angeles, you see. And that guy signed the paper like witness. And Leo Lomalee say, "Now, if I send a letter to Hollister, to make an acknowledgement of the other marriage you have over there, the other papers, you see, is going to be more time to do it. But if you marry right here right away and don't say you are married before, you see, is more faster. Just forget about you married over there in Hollister."

I: Were you married under the name Garcia?

A: No, right here I married under my real name, in Los Angeles, you see. But we not mention anymore about Hollister, and just telling, kidding my wife, "Now you going to be a bigamist, because you are married with a Juan Garcia and married with a Pablo Ordonez--and you not divorced from one another," you see. And say, "That way I can start fixing your papers right away." Okay, I was married in Los Angeles under my real name, and he say, "Now my wife she going to change the papers from your 1st girl, you know, "because she was Amada Garcia, you see. "And she going to change the papers to Amada Ordonez--in Sacramento." He was a notary public--we fill out some kind of papers like that, and the same time Dolores Torres asking for the citizenship of my ~~new~~ wife--like birth certificate, you see. And they don't find the birth certificate of my wife in El Monte, California--the only way she can get it is a delayed birth certificate, with her records about the school and the high school and things like that, you see. He got--everything he fix our papers like that--Leo Lomalee, you see. Even he send a letter to Mexico, and somebody bring my papers from over there, my birth certificate and things like that, what I need, you know--my

cartilla for servicio miltar and things like that, what I need, you know. Because when I went to see him the 1st time, he told me, "What you going to do now?" And that same day we went to the Immigration Department and I present voluntary to the Immigration Department, you see. After I present voluntary to the Immigration Department, Dolores Torres make a certificate letter--a notary public letter--say it: "To whom it may concern: This person was present voluntary to the Immigration Department, to the inspector of this name whose card is show on top of this letter," you see. Because it got a presentation card to the inspector of Immigration right there on top of the letter. And I sign, this and that, they sign the letter. And he told me, "With this letter you can go anyplace in this country for 90 days--because this is the term of the letter." Well, when I finish that thing, I telling my wife, "This letter is not good enough like he said." "Why?" My wife say, "Why?" "Because this only a simple letter asking to leave me chance to fix my papers--this letter not have any power at all. If the Immigration want to respect this, okay, but if the Immigration don't want to respect it--is not supposed to be respect a letter like that." And, "What you going to do?" I tell her, "Well, I don't think so is real good this letter over there in the Valley." But in that afternoon, Lomalee told me someone need persons to work over there in Playa del Rey, close to Playa del Rey, between Jefferson Boulevard --and he told me, Jefferson Boulevard and Lincoln Boulevard--on the corner of Lincoln and Jefferson Boulevard over there in Los Angeles. You know, is in front of it the Hughes air field of the Hughes Company, right there in that corner there--planting celery. "Well," I tell him, "I think so is better if I stay here close to you, because that way I can come--" "Sure," he says, "That way you come to pay me every month or every 15 days." "Okay, I going to stay here." And that night was pretty late, and I try to find the place, and I don't find the place because he told me Lincoln and Jefferson, you see. And the problem is, right there in the corner for a while between the Segundo and from the other side Mar Vista, the name of the street change--is not named Lincoln, is named Roosevelt. That way I cross, I cross right there on the corner of Roosevelt, I went straight ahead to Playa del Rey, I cross the ocean, and turning back again, and I hit

don't find that place. And I spend the whole goddam night, you see--about 3 o'clock in the morning I call 'em up, I phone up to the ranch, to the farmer, because even I can't use the phones over there in Los Angeles, because I don't pay attention to the instructions, you see. And I try to call 'em up, and as soon as I call 'em up, he told me where the ranch was it, and I told him I couldn't find the Lincoln, I found the Roosevelt, and he told me this is the same. And I told him, "Well, is kind of late for stay here, but I think so I going to go up to Hanford and bring my things and stay with you--is all right?" He told me, "Is all right." I come to Hanford, and I pick up my covers and my things, my belongings. And my wife was with me, and we return, we show up about ten o'clock in the morning, the next two days or something, and I tell him about it, I trying to fix up my papers, and Leo Lomalee send me right there to the spot. And the guy saw me with a small jacket, you know, no real good jacket, no real good clothes, but I was comb my hair, and I have--I think so I have a necktie or something. And he told me, "Hey, you working in the fields before?" "Sure, I working in the fields--I working over there in Corcoran, planting cotton, chopping cotton," and I start telling him what I'm doing. And he told me, "Okay--that old house is the house. Go and see the house and clean the house for today, and tomorrow you come to help me to plant celery." Well, I start next day planting celery, and my wife was right there with me in the old house. She fix the old house, and we live in that house, you see. And about the next 3 days show up five more guys with the same letter I have.

One's from Parlier, and another one from Fresno, another one from Firebaugh--different places. They come with that letter, and Leo Lomalee say that somebody need some persons, and "Go and help to him." Well, about a month later, he call me and start asking me what I don't make enough payments to him. And I told him, "Because my wife she is expecting a baby, and I going to pay the hospital." "Oh no, she can go to the County Hospital." "No, she don't like it, and I think she not going to be in the County Hospital--she never going to the County Hospital, you see." Anyway, I telling the guy I going to keep makéng payments, and I pay him about 20 dollars a month, or 10, when I have it, and when I don't have I don't pay anything. And but he start fighting with me against it, and one time I told him, "You know, you not an Immigration officer. The soon you give me the papers, maybe I give you the 500 dollars. But 1st give me the papers, because you know I got a lot of things wrong, and I not ready to fix it up my paper--they going to find out the lies about the pasaport, or things like that." You know, always I was afraid about that pasaport and the things I do in San Diego--that the Immigration maybe discover those things. All the time I was afraid. Even when I receive my paper I was afraid maybe tomorrow, maybe after tomorrow they check in Washington and find out everything, you see. And that's why I don't want to pay ~~all~~ all the money to him. Maybe if I/got that thing, maybe I pay to him all the money, or I can don't afford to pay.

I: How much were you paying him a week?

A: A month. About 20 dollars or 15 dollars a month. When I have it. When I don't have it, I don't pay anything. Well, and he keep working on my case, you see. And I keep making a few payments. And I stay from January, March, April, May, June, July, right there on the ranch. And in August--in October of that year, they told me I got all my papers ready, and ready to go to Nogales, to Guadalajara. And from Guadalajara to return back, you see. But before, when I leave in March, or maybe in July, I leave the ranch for the apio, the celery, I leave the ranch and I went to working with somebody in construction, and they pay me only a dollar an hour, you see--in construction supposed to be pay two-fifty an hour. But anyway, they give me a home, and I figure it out I going to learn a little bit of construction and things like that.

I: In Playa del Rey?

A: Yes, a small contractor. You see, we work--most of the time we working right there in North Hollywood, or in Palos Verdes, because is a lot of roads. We digging cesspools and septic tanks in those places. We make those kind of job because nobody want to do it, and under contract or under union payment, because it was too expensive. But that guy pay us only a dollar an hour--he can afford to make it in 8 days or more in one place. Well, I stay like that, and my 2nd girl born up, born in Culver City on the 20 of June, 1955. After she born, he told me my paper is already read to make a trip to Guadalajara, and explain me the whole deal again. And tell me, "You never say nothing about Tijuana; don't mention about Tijuana, or about San Yáidro." And that's it. Well, I went to Nogales, I check out from Nogales, I tell them I depart voluntary from the country--

I: You went by yourself, huh?

A: By myself. I brought my wife right there to Hanford; I made a trip alone to Nogales. And I went to Guadalajara. And I went to the Consul, I present all my papers, and they say, "Okay, the only thing you need is a letter, a police letter from Los Angeles County--that's what you need. And you need a Mexican pasaport." And I tell him, "That guy told me I don't need

any Mexican pasaport." "Well, really you don't need the Mexican pasaport, but if the Immigration, the Mexican Immigration, they find you, but you don't have an Mexican passport, and you got this old paper ready to go to that country, they can throw away all your papers. It's up to you--if you want that risk it's up to you. At least get a visa--not a complete passport, but only a visa." And that's what I get, a visa, a visa for six months to stay in this country--to stay out of Mexico for 6 months, you see. And that's what I get, and I was waiting for the paper, and the letter from Los Angeles don't show up. And I send a letter to Leo Lomalee, and I tell him about that letter, and even he send me the letter from the police--Los Angeles, you see.

I: I don't understand all this. That first letter he gave you was to give you permission to stay in the United States?

A: Yes. From my own will I went to the Immigration to say--asking for a chance to fix it up my papers.

I: And that letter gave you permission to live in the United States?

A: Only for 90 days. Trying to collect my letters, to collect my things what I need to depart after 90 days.

I: But you lived there more than 90 days.

A: Yes, and after 90 days I went to the office--Immigration office in Los Angeles, and the inspector then put a new date on the letter.

I: So that was a legal letter?

A: This is a legal letter in front of the Immigration.

I: In other words, the Immigration knew you were there illegally?

A: Yes. The Immigration knew I was illegally, but they give me a chance to fix up my papers. Well, after I get my papers I went to Guadalajara; but before went to Guadalajara, I check out in the Immigration the 14 of October right there right there in Nogales, Arizona. I give them a copy of the paper--I was return voluntary to Mexico. And after that I went over there in Guadalajara and put my papers to the Immigration, to the Consul. And the Consul told me the things I needed, a letter from the police department in Los Angeles, you see--because I live for more than 6 months in Los Angeles. And he told me, "The letter--we going to send a letter asking for that letter personally"--the Consul, you see. He said they going to do it for themselves. But after a month they don't receive any letter, and I send a letter to Leo Lomalee, and I explain what happen, and Leo Lomalee send the letter special to the Consul, and told me, "I send already a letter from the police department," After that, it was already November, December, and I start putting doubts if they going to give me a chance to come to the United States, because already I got more than two months. Well, anyway, they put me a date, for the 17 of January, 1956. And I stay over 3 months in Mexico. And meanwhile, I must looking for work around Mexico, or trying to--because the only thing I take from here is a hundred dollars. And supposed to be save about 25 for return back. And I spend more of my money over there. And that's when I went to my old house. I find out the house close, was closed, and I find found the books, the record books of my brother--the business that they got, about the restaurant, and I find out all the furniture they have, and all the furniture is just pile up in the house and everything like that, and that's why I figure it out my mother and my brother, they make a good business and just leave everything like that, just to come to United States.

I: Oh, your brother was in Tijuana now?

A: Yes, by that time he was in Tijuana. But I have over 3 years or 5 years I don't saw him anymore, you see. From August, 1950, in Guadalajara, I never saw him again till 1959. You see, for 9 years I never saw again my brother. And my mother I saw once in 1953, remember. But before that I was real disappointment about what they do. I looked all the chairs and the tables, rusty and everything, just because nobody stay in the house, you see. And the house is almost falling in pieces, because nobody take care of it, or the things. And anyway, I looking for a job, and I got a job painting bicycles, you see. And they told me, "You know how to paint?" "Yes, I know how to paint." "Where? Where you learn?" "I learn in the United States." And they give me a chance right away to use the painting gun. And I never paint before, you see. But I know that it is you just keep moving the paint gun--that's all/you need. And that's how what

I noted the difference. I start thinking about when I trying to learn the mechanic, and it was too hard because they don't want me to touch the tools-- and now because I tell them I know it, because I got experience in the United States, they give me a chance to do everything, you see. And after 15 days or so, I was a "master"--a "paint master"! That factory make bicycles in those days, make bicycles 24 hours a day. And I got master, or the chief of the night shift. And I was the guy in charge to paint the bicycles from 12 o'clock to 8 o'clock in the morning. You see, every day, every day. And I don't make much money, I make about 12 pesos a day, for 8 hours' work. But I start thinking about the way some--. I can put it this way--a example you see: I was hire together with another guy. And the other guy, he was real afraid to make some kind of mistake with the bicycles. And I start telling, "You don't need be afraid. I was afraid my whole life, and that's why I'm

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END OF REEL

Well, like I say, we are over there painting bicycles, you see, and I telling that guy why because if we are afraid to do something wrong, they never give you a chance to learn anything over there. And I told him, "Just paint! Andy anyway, you make a mistake, the paint is not going to do anything to the metal--anything going to be wrong, we can wash it and clean it and it going to be ready for tomorrow or after tomorrow." And I told him, "Andy anyway, I not ~~g~~ going to stay here, and that's why I want to show you the way you can do something. Because that's why I lost my chances, because nobody give me a chance to do nothing here. And I waiting for something, to move to the United States, and I don't think so I going to never return." But anyway, I was afraid the Immigration any minute can find out my whole bunch of mistakes or mentiras, lies, you see. That's why I never have confidence to go and fix my papers. Always I was thinking, maybe it's tomorrow, maybe tomorrow they call me, or they not going to call me because of this and that. I forgot to telling you, when I was over there in Los Angeles, somebody from Parlier, one of the persons from Parlier, he told me--later on we find out--. No, let's go back to--.

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Anyway, the 17 of January, they call me over there in the Consul, and they told me my paper is approve. But before they call me: "What is your name?" "So-and-so." "And what is the alias you used?" I told her my name, and she went and check again--the secretary check again the places, maybe for someone to my alias. And she pull up some kind of card, she say, "What is the last

name you use?!" And I tell her, Juan Garcia. And she say, "Oh, I figure out you Garcia Robles," or something--maybe someone report a Garcia Robles. Anyway, my visa was approve, and I pay my 25 dollars, after I pay for the doctor and the examination and this and that. And they told me, "Okay, now you are admitted to the United States. You have 3 months to cross the border." And later on I fix up my things and start moving to Nogales. I came to Nogales, and those days my old pasaport and everything with me, but--when I were right there in the Nogales, even I was afraid, and I remember I make in a lot of pieces my old pasaport, my local pasaport, remember? my form 5. I make a lot of pieces, and throw it, and forget that deal. And I went to the Immigration right there, and I gave them--. The officer ask me how many times--how many places I went to the United States. I tell him, "Only from right here, from Nogales." And he say, he told me if someday I was over there in Ciudad Juarez or Laredo, and I tell him I never was in those places. And, "That means you never was catch up by the Immigration?" I told him the time they got me, they got me from the dance right there in Tulare...Or even--I don't tell him--I tell him no, because I think I change my name again and I don't give him the name I use over there when they got me, I change again my name, you see. That's why I tell him I don't have nothing to do with it, and again they checking the places to--for maybe some kind of report or something. They don't find anything. And then they send me to the doctor right there in the border, and he check me up, and saw the papers, my pictures of the lungs and everything. And that day was fix it up, and he told me, "Later on we going to mail your green card, or your visa, to your address." Well, I came to Los Angeles to see Leo Lomalee, and I tell him about it, and he tell me, "Okay--where is the rest of the money?" And I told him, "I going to start working, I going to pay you." But meanwhile, before I tell him, I send my registration right here to Hanford, my green card. But in those days, the postman, they don't want to leave the mail right there in the address because of one dog we have right there, you see. And I think so I lost that 1st card, the green card, because of the mailman, he don't leave it right there, and return it. And I tell him, Leo Lomalee, and even Leo Lomalee send a request for another new green card to his office. But in those days, when I went to pick it up, the green card, I don't find/any more any Leo Lomalee. out

? It was a new laywer, Richard Cole. Richard Cole told me the Immigration got Leo Lomalee, he was caught by the Immigration, and now he was going to be in charge of fix it up the rest of his business. And told me, "You going to pay the rest of the money to me." And later on, in those days, I remember somebody told me the man I told you about, from Parlier, he say Leo Lomalee was investigated by the Immigration because he start making a coyote business for the whole state of California, you see. He got representatives even in Sacramento, in Stockton, you see. But the reason he made a mistake right here in Fresno, because most of the Immigration, when they find a letter, that kind of letter he give me, those guys maybe they make a fight right there in the places around here, fight with somebody, and when the Immigration show up, they try to stop them with that letter, you see. But the Immigration sometimes respect the letter and sometimes not--even with that letter they throw back to Mexico, see? And Leo Lomalee try to make a big manifestation about that thing, because a lot of kids stay without a father because right there in Fresno the Immigration was too roughs with that kind of letter, with that kind of person, you see. And he explain, he told me, that one day Leo Lomalee send a letter to all of the guys around here in the San Joaquin Valley to show up about 3 o'clock in the afternoon right there in the Immigration office in Fresno, California, with all sons and daughters and everybody, all his family. He try to make a big manifestation with everybody. And he say he went to that manifestation there. And show up about 50 mans with family, with about over 150 persons, small kids and big persons and babies. And they give you service--I think the Immigration is on the 2nd

or the 3rd floor right here in Fresno. And okay, they start filling up the Immigration office more and more and more. And when everybody is in there, or most of everybody was in there, Leo Lomalee start talking, you see, about the rough problem when those guys is throw out to Mexico. And all the kids start crying, the small kids start crying, you see, start making noise. And I think the officer, the chief of the Immigration, was pretty rough right there in Fresno, and start an arguement, and keep arguing, and they are fighting each other--

I: He was fighting with Leo Lomalee?

A: Just by arguing, by words. And telling "Go to hell with all the people!" and everything. And he was kick out from the office--something like that. And even the elevators, or the service elevators, they don't give service to the kids, or to nobody of those persons, you see. By order of the chief of Immigration. And that guy told me all the kids is crying, and everything is dirty, dirty, and they make a mess right there in the--. And that's why the Immigration, from Fresno, start investigate this person. And find out some records--they try to fix some person from 1940, far away from 1940, and someone--they found receipts--they charge 200, 300 or 500 dollars, like me by example--some kind of paper sign up "I going to pay 500 dollars"--and that's why the Immigration catch up him and throw him in jail for 5 years, 4 years in jail--and after come out from the jail he is going to be sent to Mexico. And Dolores Torres, because she was his wife--she was a notary public--they take away her license, and take away--I think so they have two 1956 cars, the cars of the year, a real nice home in Los Angeles, and all the equipment from the office--the Immigration take away everything.

I: Was he a citizen of the United States?

A: I don't know he was a citizen or not--but I think so he born in Mexico. (check on this)

I: I don't understand about these letters--were they legal or not?/ By

A: The letters are legal--but it is only according to the officer. For example, if I are fighting, if I are a drunk guy, and the Immigration say, "That is not good for nothing"--even if the letter is legal or something. The letter is legal, but only to show you are willing, or you are working or collecting all the things you need to fix it up your papers. But everybody supposed to hold the respect, or something--according to the way you are acting.

I: Was it against the law for him to sell those letters?

A: No, not exactly against the law--but I think so the thing he made wrong is he charge too much money. And he don't fix some persons. By example, if I give him 500 dollars, and he don't fix my problem, he never return my 500 dollars, you see. Anyway, I return over there to Hanford, and I wait to receive my papers, and I figure it out, What I going to do after? Because even when I receive my visa, or my green card, I figure it out some day, sooner or later, they going to find out all the things I don't tell them over there about San Ysidro, you see. Always I keep in my mind that thing. And that's why, the soon I was here, right away I move from Hanford to Los Angeles to work 3 years in one company or someplace to stay together and apply for my citizenship and try--if I get my citizenship maybe I going to get more satisfaction, or more self-confidence in myself.

I: In other words, you weren't a citizen yet--you just had a resident card?

A: Yes.

I: But you could live here all your life with that?

A: Yes, I could live all my life--but not a citizen. A married man have to live here 3 years before can be a citizen. And as soon as I receive my other visa, my other green card, we move to Los Angeles. And I start looking about--

this was the Land of Opportunity according to what I learned, and I start looking for the opportunity, you see. But I find out--I going to night school to learn punch press, drill press, and lathe operator, something like that, and I try to learn English, basic English, you see. Well, I going 4 nights a week to school, and I keep working, but the only thing--the opportunities I found--

I: Working at what?

A: Any kind of job. Sometimes--like in El Monte, I went some places, like the place where they paint trailer houses, I tell them I have experience about painter--and anyway they give me a chance, but only they pay me a dollar-twenty-five--this is the opportunity they give me. And if I pay the rent--sixty dollars a month--I can't live on a dollar-twenty-five over there, you see. And I figure it out if I learn something--I start learn those things, and keep waiting for some kind of raise, but--maybe about 3 months later they give me a raise of 5 cents--nothing good to me. And that's why I was disappointment, and start moving, and I joined construction, because construction pay about two-fifty some an hour. And I figure it out I can live better, you see. And that's why I keep moving, and I looking for the opportunity. After, when I learn two years' lathe operator, or some thing like that, I start looking for a job, and they told me, "You got experience in drill press and lathe operator?" "Yes, I learn in school." "Oh no--we need somebody with experience in the field working already." And anyway, "How much you want to earn?" "At least one-fifty, or one-seventy-five, to make enough to pay my rent." "No, if you want to working, we give you one-twenty-five or a dollar an hour." And that's why I figure it out--the opportunity to me is--if you don't have a family you got more opportunity than if you got a family--according to if you have more family, you got less opportunity to learn what you want, or do what you want. This is the Land of Opportunity--if you want to do that thing, you can do it right here, or in Mexico, or anyplace. This is my definition to "opportunity", you see. Well, I stayed the 3 years right there in Los Angeles, and applied for my citizenship papers, because I went to learn citizenship too, and study the Constitution and things like that. But not only because I want to become a citizen, but because I want to prove if Washington or the Immigration, sooner or later they going to find out about the lies I say there before, you see. I fill out my papers for citizenship, and I apply for my citizenship in 1959. And I pass my examination, and in September they give me my citizenship papers right there in Los Angeles. That's why, maybe I think they forgot already about my passport and about those other things I do wrong. And now I living a lie, only in my conscience I think about maybe someday show up that other passport and--

I: Well, you couldn't lose your citizenship, could you?

A: Yes, I can lose the citizenship. According to the rules, if you say 3 lies in your application for citizenship, 2 or 3 lies, you lost your citizenship. And I don't remember how many lies I said. That's why I keep thinking about my citizenship--maybe it's good or not.

I: So you couldn't get a job as a punch press operator?

A: I can't get a job as a punch press. Maybe because in 1957 I think there was a kind of depression. Or maybe because they don't want to give me a chance because I don't speak very good English. One ^{TIME} day I remember in 1958--in 3 days I move from Pasadena to Anaheim. In my car I spend I don't know how many on gas. And I move from the morning till night looking for a job--any kind of factory. I don't looking for punch press especially--any kind of job, and I don't find anything. Pasadena, San Fernando, just mention East Los

Angeles, West Los Angeles, El Monte, Azusa--all towns I can remember, I looking 3 or 4 days, you see, and I can't get any kind of job at all. That's why I was real disappointment about that Land of Opportunity.

I: Where was your mother all this time--in Tijuana?

A: Yes. Remember, in 1952 I told you I saw she in Tijuana? And later on she got her pasaport for 72 hours to Los Angeles, the kind of pasaport I had before.

I: What was she doing in Tijuana?

A: When she got her pasaport, she come and workin in the United States, you see. Working in some houses, cleaning houses and things like that in San Diego--and later on in Los Angeles.

I: Before she got her papers fixed to do that, what did she do in Tijuana?

A: Well, she did the same cooking job over there in Tijuana. But they pay a little money.

I: What did your brother do in Tijuana?

A: He didn't do nothing. Just the same--walking and walking in one place and another. I think he stay cooking in some restaurant in Mexicali--no cooking, like servant, waiter. He stay in Mexicali and my mother stay in Tijuana for a long time. And maybe in 1959 I went to see my brother to Mexicali. And I talk to him, why he stay so many years. Because he come to la frontera in 1955, and he was afraid to come to this country. He even--he never come across the border. Because he was afraid--afraid to be an alambre, you see. And I told him, "Goddammit--you 5 years right here in front of the United States--you don't want to cross the border. Get out of here--this is not a place to live, right here on the frontera. You want to go, go the wire like alambre or bracero, or go back to our place in Mexico." And he told me he going to expect, maybe someday he can fix his papers. I tell him, "Okay, I going to help you fix the papers if you helpme later on to fix my mother's papers." And I start visiting in 1959. In 1960 I fix it up the papers for him, for my brother, you see. And but my mother have a pasaport to working right here in Los Angeles, anyway. And he came to working. And anyway, she want to fix it up her papers for work. And I told her, I going to fix it up instead my brother, and maybe later on between the--go together--we fix up your papers--better than myself. I fix up his papers, and he come in 1960, my brother, with his green card like me, you see. By those days I was a citizen.

I: Did your mother go to live with you in El Monte?

A: In El Monte, yes, she live for a while with us. But anyway, after a month or two months we were fighting, because she start like always in Mexico. And I start telling about it, if she going to do the same thing like in Mexico, we not going to finish anymore her papers. Or just, "Leave me alone"--that's what I tell her one or two times. "That's why I come to this country, because I want to be alone. Now you trying to follow me? Even you trying to follow me, I don't mind it. But just leave me a chance to lead my own life."

I: Did she get along with your wife?

A: No--just try to make fights with anything. But because my wife was real--she don't pay attention to she, you see. I remember one time, I keep telling my wife--she want to fight with my wife, and try to hit her, you see, try to make a real fight, and hit her like she do over there with anybody else, with my grandfather or my sister, you see. But my wife told me--. No, that time my mother told me, you see, after I give her a ride to one aunt we got right there in Los Angeles, you see. And when I give her a ride, she told me, "Last night I telling this and that to your wife, and she don't say nothing--just start singing, like she don't pay me attention, she look me like I was crazy. I wanted to say something, to hit her on the mouth or

something." She wanted my wife to say something, to hit her back, but my wife don't pay attention to she. And she was mad even because my wife don't say anything. But later on she appreciate more my wife, because she don't say anything, because after my brother was married, and she fight with my brother's wife, and she answer back, and they start fighting together, you see--like any other person. And that's why now, she got more estimation for my wife.than for my brother's wife.

I: How many different jobs did you have in Los Angeles--what were some of your other jobs?

A: The 1st year I work in 14 different places.

I: Did you finally get a good job?

A: I filed/my income tax, you know, and I list 14 different places, you know-- for

next year, the

include construction, factories--. And the/2nd year I found a job in construction in a plumbing shop, and that plumbing shop give me a chance to working like steady. But sometimes I--I went every day, every day in the morning, looking for if they got something for me. If they don't got nothing for me, they say, "We don't got nothing for you; come tomorrow." And like that I stay about two months or 3 months like that, you know. But at least I can say I have a job, you see. And it was construction, labor construction. And I was disappointment.. But in that time, I hear about the CSO already, in Los Angeles. About the Mexicans, they don't take any action and vote--and I remember the things that happen to me right here in Corcoran, in Stratford, and maybe, I figure it out, we can educate our people and can do something, and can be active, I can do something. That's why, when I was in Los Angeles, I stay only to prove if I can get my citizenship, and later on return to Hanford, because over there in Los Angeles the CSO speak only English. And not able to talk in English, myself, you see. But I remember, I remember when I was right here in Hanford, the president say, in Spanish, now the government call us to be part of the government, the government open the door to go and be a good citizen. And those words I never forget, and I keep in my mind, and that's why I return to Hanford and try to put all the people, we/ourselves, together and be good citizens.

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I: You returned to Hanford just because of the CSO?

A: Just because of the CSO.

I: Well, didn't you ever get a good job in Los Angeles?

A: The best job--that's what I told you--is a plumber. Now maybe, I figure it out, I made a mistake, because if I stay two more years in the plumbing shop, I can apply for my plumbing license, you see. But anyway, now is too late-- that thing I don't find out until a year or two years after I was here.

I: So your mother finally moved out and got her own place, huh?

A: When my mother was with us, she only stay visiting with her pasaport for 72 hours. And after she have a fight with my wife, she told me to take her away with another niece--with her niece, you see. And before leave to the house, you see, I know my mother very well, and she told me before leave, about half a block before, she told me, "Leave me right here, because I want to go walking, I don't want them to see you with me." And do you know why? I figure it out, because now later on, she one time was mad and told me that I not give her ride, that I send her walking to that house. And I told her, "Remember when I got the car, and I parked in front of the house, and I put your things down from my own hand, because I figure it out that's what you going to say later on." And that was in 1959, and now in 1964 she tell me that I not give her a ride to some house, that I send her walking, when it's not true. And now I fix her papers, and/she want me to go and live in Los

now

Angeles. She told me, if I go to Los Angeles, she pay my rent, and she take care of my sons--that way my wife help me to work--but she don't want to live here, she want to be in Los Angeles. And I told her, "I don't want to be there." And she say, I don't want to live there because I want to run away from she.

I: So what did you do after you returned to Hanford?

A: I started working in the fields again, and in construction. When I don't find nothing in construction, I go to the field.

I: And so that's the only kind of work you've done since you've returned here?

A: Yes.

I: And where's your mother now?

A: In Los Angeles.

I: And where's your brother?

A: My brother, I think he living in Tijuana and working in San Diego. But now I think he's over there in Modesto someplace.

I: Does he have papers now?

A: Yes, he has a green card now.

I: And he's married, huh?

A: Yes.

I: To a--?

A: To a Mexican woman--from Mexico.

I: Does he have any children?

A: Yes, he got about 4 children.

I: Why did he go to Modesto?

A: I think so now he's picking peaches or something. I don't know. He never goes to see my mother, because he's afraid to the big city, Los Angeles. He not able to drive in the big city.

I: And what kind of work does your mother do now?

A: Restaurant work, and cooking.

I: When is the last time you saw her?

A: Well, in this year, 1964, I went to visit her, because I have about 8 months I never see her, you know. And I figure it out, she will be surprised when I visit her. And I made a trip--I don't have much money, I take 20 dollars. only

And I figure it out, I going to pay about 12 dollars transportation--

I: Why didn't you take your car?

A: Because my car is not good anymore, I'm afraid to run my car. And I going to be alone; if I take my car, maybe I take the whole family. Well, I went over there, I show up about 3 o'clock in the morning. Because I knock about 3 or 4 times on the door--she was mad because I wake up everybody, because she live in a hotel. And anyway, we start talking real nice for a few hours. And in the morning she start needling me, start telling me about if I got enough money to return, because she put--the day before she put all her money in the bank, and she don't have enough--only 10 dollars or so. I told her, "Don't worry--I have enough to return and that's all I need--I come to visit you." And she receive a letter from my just sister, from San Pedro Tlaquepaque, for the mother's day, but she don't receive

anything from Esteben, from my brother. And we start talking about Esteben, and she was real disappointment because he never went to visit her now. Well, we walking right there through Los Angeles, when she start telling me, "You know, I suffer too much for you, son," and "I remember the time you not give me any ride from El Monte when you living there, and you don't give me any ride and you leave me to walk the whole road." And I told her, "Remember-- I take the things to you, and I park my car in front of my aunt and everything, because I figure it out you going to say things like that. And now I come to visit and that's the only thing you want to tell me?" "No, but--" And all the time the 1st thing she done is start erylng and things like that. And sometimes I feel like it is my fault, you see, and that's why I return, to do something right, but I don't know--. Anyway, that minute was in the afternoon, about 3 o'clock or something; and we are thinking if I want to take her see some movie, because in the night I going to return to my home, you see, to to/ Hanford. And she say, "You going to return because your wife don't give you any permission to stay more than one day," or something. I tell her, "No, because I want to go looking for a job," or something. And she say, "You want to stay there because you don't want to stay close to me." And when we pass by from the bus depot, I told her "I want to use the rest room," and she went to the restroom too. And when I come out from the rest room I find out, I turn around all the way, I don't see my mother anymore around. And I figure it out she leave me right there because she was real mad because I start answer her back. Telling about, she made a mistake when leave me real small with my grandfather. Because if she take care of the things my father leave to her, it not necessary for nobody to come to this country and look like poor people around here,/see. When we can stay in better condition over you

there. And maybe that's why she start crying, and I think so, I don't know, if she leave me or something. But after an hour-and-a-half or two hours, she come up around the depot, and told me she sit down in some different place and fall down asleep. And I don't know if she fall down asleep really, and sleep right there in the depot, or leave for the home and later on return for me or something. And that's why--because I say to myself, what I going to do? If I go to the hotel and start telling, she going to be crying and we going to keep fighting. I figure it out, I not going to go to her home anymore, I going to sit down right here and wait till 3 o'clock in the morning-- is the next bus to Hanford. And that's why I sit down, and I fall asleep, and later on I see my mother around. For 30 minutes or more I looking around for my mother, and I don't see her, and I sit down and fall asleep. And later on, when I come to Hanford, I send a letter telling about my daughter Melanie, because she is real friendly, and say why her grandmother doesn't come to visit her, you know. And I send the letter, telling about her granddaughter wanting to see her. And she send a letter telling me what for she coming to see the granddaughter? Even the granddaughter don't send any present for mother's day or something. Well, we are real mad, and I got a paper and I tell her, "Yes, I'm sorry for my daughters; they don't send you any present for mother's day. But maybe next time I going to take a picture like my sister do from Tlaquepaque, and maybe the picture do more than the things, and asking for money." Because I read the letter, you see, and my sister always send a letter asking for 500 dollars or a 100 dollars. And most of the time she send all the money to her, you see. My sister left her husband in Guanajuato, you see, and move to Guadalajara. And/she got one of her sons is starting for a doctor. And I tell now my mother, "That lady is supposed to got money to spend on her son for be a doctor. If really is poor people, he can do something else, not especially doctor, but maybe a small, short carver," you see. But everytime she call for 500 dollars or something, for fix the house or something, she was sick or something, my mother keep sending money to her.

A: I think they got some kind of cleaning, like cleaners.

I: Oh, she has some children, doesn't she? But she doesn't have a husband now?

A: No. She got 7 or 8.

I: How does your mother like the United States?

A: Oh, like all old peoples, a lot of old peoples talking about Mexico is better of something, but stay living here, you see. And I don't like the kind of person like that, like I say: "Mexico is better, Mexico is better," and this and that, and keep living right here like me. I can't say, "Mexico is better than the United States." Maybe if I go to Mexico I can make a better living than here--I am not sure, but maybe because I not try yet, you see. And I have more experience. But that old people, like we call it in Spanish, "With the tripas in the United States, with the heart over there in Mexico."

I: Why doesn't she go back, if she likes Mexico better?

A: Like I told you, maybe over there not make enough money like right here in this country, ~~Mex~~ you see.

I: Well, how do you like the United States? Which do you like better?

A: Like I say, I come right here by mistake. And now I stay here because of the mistake I made. Like, if I go to Mexico, maybe I got a chance to do more than--. If I going to bend my knees, if I go around the politicians, you see, and run in the political party, because I think so I got enough inclination to the political deal, you see--I figure it out: if I go to Mexico, and be into the political party, in the PRI, I can be a big person over there. But that means I going to bend my knees in front of the somebody else. And that's why maybe I am afraid to go. If I join another party, the government is going to kick me out right away. That's why I thinking I can do better things over there in Mexico. But now I figure it out is too late, and because of my mistake I supposed to stay here, and try to do something for my people right here. Because I know, if we can do something for the Mexicans here, that going to be good for the Mexicans over there.

I: Do you like Mexico better then?

A: For what?

I: As a country, as a place to live.

A: No, I can't tell you it is better over there. To me, you can live anyplace you go. And you can't say, "This is better." How can I say it is better over there in Mexico if I never try? When I try I was in worse condition than here. I can't say the United States is best, because I don't try in Mexico yet, you see. If I try again in Mexico, the 2nd time, maybe I can judge exactly what is the best place.

I: So you don't know which is better?

A: No. Right now the United States is better. But the best of the better I can't tell you, because I don't have any 2nd chance in Mexico, you see.

I: Why do you think the United States is better right now?

A: It is better because right now, according to the government, I can express myself more frankly, more realistically than in Mexico, you see. I try to telling the people--because all the Mexicans live right here like me, they figure it out if they be active in politics or they do something against the government, the government take away their papers and throw to Mexico, you see. And all the Mexicans, 100%, is as scared of that thing. Even they don't tell you, they afraid to tell you--but in their subconscious they afraid someday the American government throw all these Mexicans south of the border.

I: What do you think of the people here in the United States?

A: If the people is American, they are good people; if the people is Mexican-American, they trying to laugh at you, and they trying to show you you not ~~know~~ nothing, you are a dumb person, because you come from a dumb country, or something like that.

I: Oh, you think the Anglos are good people?

A: The Anglos, some ones is better than the Mexicans. And the Mexicans, a lot of discord; we don't look like brothers. And things like that--we not united, we don't feel the brotherhood or something. They real hard, because everybody try to make advantage of somebody else. Like the guy from Mexicali, you see--I told you about he try to make advantage of the other guys came from another country--from another state.

I: Are you glad you came to the United States?

A: Yes, I am glad, because I figure it out, it open my eyes, and I know what things is wrong and what things is right. And I know I made mistakes, I know what my mistakes.

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I: What do you think were your mistakes?

A: My mistakes is--because if I stay in first place--the 1st time, if I stay with the engineer over there in Etzatlan, now I be something like engineer, no? If--later on, if I went and talked to Lazaro Cardenas, I be the pilot now, you see. Those is my mistakes. And if I stay in the Army, now I supposed to even be sergeant or something. But something--a manly career, you see. Now I am here, I don't have any career, this is my mistake.

I: Do you think your mistake was in being too proud?

A: Yes, being too proud, I think that's what it is.

I: Why do you think you were too proud?

A: I don't know, just my--like my mother told me, "Te cortaron para rico; te dejaron abandonado." (?) I try to--now I try to--I don't want to be a real proud man or something. But anyway, I think so is too late, because maybe my grandmother, they give me a lot of pride, and my grandfather, you see. Because when I was with them, always I use shoes, they want to make a good man from me. And maybe they give me a lot of extravagant ideas, or something. But they are poor people, they not rich people, you see. But I don't know, something wrong. I think something/in our mind, like I say-- we got

like when I learning hipnotismo and things like that. I don't know--I can't tell you what it is. I know I made a mistake. But maybe it is supposed to be the experience, what I learn in life. I learn a lot of things--in that case is not a mistake, is my right thing to do to come and learn a lot of things around here. And is only the beginning; if God help me a little bit, maybe we can do a newspaper, maybe we can do a lot of things to help--try to help the other people. My main problem is trying to show to the American people--to the Mexican-American right here,--if Mexico is like another country, like another man, he suffer sometimes, he is trying to walk to the progress, and I figure it out we need a lot of understanding between ~~our~~ our countries. Because I think this way: the Mexican from that country to me is like sons from a divorced couple. Figure it out this way: if a couple gets divorced, somebody divorces, you see, with 5 kids or 10 kids, you know, and the man's got 5 and the lady's got 5, you see--and the 5 they going with the man--is a poor man--and they must working like devils, you see; but the other 5 stay with ~~the~~ his mother, the mother maybe later on got money, and they grow like rich persons, you see. Now the people over there in Mexico is like the poor sons; you must work like a devil to become some thing, you see. And right here in the United States is the sons, they don't need to

work, if they smart enough to use their own brains, you see. And this is the difference; we are brothers, but we are separate like this, you see.

I: Do you think a Mexican-American has as much chance as an Anglo?

A: Yes, they got much chance, but they are afraid to use it, because we are keeping in the subconscious that we are Mexicanos. And another thing, all the pochos, or all the Mexican-Americans, is feel like gorachudos (?) or like sombrero grande, because every day they come in from Mexico and show to the American people the way the people is over there, you see. That means, if I live in this country, and I go to talk with a white man--but anyway, the white man he not going to see me with my suit and everything in my mind; he going to see me with my big hat and my huaraches the way he look the day before at someone from Mexico, you see. And that thing, I'm pretty sure, we got in our subconscious, and only the guys that think over that thing they go real easy like any other American. But many stay in the field, and many stay--they afraid to do things like that, because any Mexican is compare right away with the Indian, or something like that, you see.

I: Do you think there's much prejudice against Mexican-Americans here?

A: Well, I can't tell you exactly yes or no. But, like to me, they show a lot of prejudice probably there in Los Angeles--they don't give me any chance to learn or to do, even if I know how to do the job.

I: Is there more prejudice here in Hanford, or less?

A: Less, because--. Is more, and less. More, because there is less places to go and asking for a job, and those jobs is complete fill up by white people and some other people, you see. And less, because you don't go and asking, because you know already you don't have much chance, and so you go to the fields right away.

I: Are you fairly happy now? Do you have a fairly good life?

A: Well, I fairly happy now. Not real good, but I'm living, I'm existing. I say I "existing" because of the low salary the farmers pay. I can't be happy when--. Maybe the trouble with me is this, you know: I know the life. When I was in Etzatlan I telling my grandfather, "I don't want to learn to read, I don't want to learn to write nothing. Because this is my life. I going to live here and be a farmer like you." But now I learn about a lot of things, you know--a good life, and bad life, and that's why maybe in my mind I need more money--that's what I want, is more money. But what is the good if I going to work 24 hours a day to get that money? What for I going to need the money? I want it to spend when I got the time.

I: What would you do if you had enough money? What would you use it for?

A: To study, to know places, is a lot of things.

I: To have a bigger house?

A: Especially--you hit it right there! A new house and better transportation.

I: A new car?

A: Not a new car. Before I want a new car, but now I don't want a new car, it's just I want a a fairly good car to move from one place to another.

I: Do you think you'll stay here in Hanford the rest of your life?

A: Not the rest of my life. I going to try to stay here until my kids go to high school and everything else. Because I remember the hard trouble it is to change to a new school or something.

I: What do you plan to do later?

A: I can't say what I going to do right now. Like I say, I'm existing, and I'm

trying to live, and trying to educate my family,. Because I figure it out, if I give a good education to my daughters or my sons, they going to prove I got brains, or I got the brains to do something myself--because I don't have the opportunity to do it, they going to do something for me.

I: Where would you like to live after they get their education?

A: After--if I live right here, but I have the chance to travel to the place I want to travel--I don't have any special place--maybe close to the ocean, or maybe in the mountains--something like that, to see all the sky and the ocean, or the mountains. That's why maybe I stay here in Hanford, because I walk a little bit outside in the country and I see the mountains--I don't see any ocean, but the mountains and the sky--is more free than in the big city. But anyway, when I was in Los Angeles, I want to be alone, I climb up on top of the house, or on top of my car, I sit down, looking the stars, and don't bother me too much about the life. I can concentrate on what I went.

THE END